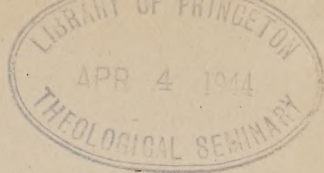


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ANSWER TO SKEPTICS

A Translation of

St. Augustine's *Contra Academicos*

by

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With an Introduction by

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FOREWORD

Latin scholars have no need of a translation of Saint Augustine's works: they can, with far more satisfaction and enlightenment, read them in the original. Saint Augustine is presented in an English translation, not because of his majestic Latin style, but because of his profound thought on problems that are of perennial interest and importance. Hence, the purpose of the present translation is to make his *Contra Academicos* available in English to those who are unable to read it in Latin. The translator believes that the disparate characters of the two languages make it impossible to reproduce in English the unique beauty of Augustine's Latin: he knows that for him his own limitations preclude that possibility. And he feels that in many cases a mere verbal English rendering would—instead of revealing Augustine's style—obscure, and perhaps distort, Augustine's meaning. Accordingly, his constant aim has been to give, not a sentence-by-sentence translation, but a translation that would be at once faithful to the original and easily intelligible to the reader. Conformably with this aim, he has almost invariably recast the involved Latin periods into less complex English sentences, he has not infrequently transposed clauses or even sentences, and he has occasionally supplied connectives where none were used or needed in the original. In all this, his aim was clearness only; for he believes that clearness of expression contributes towards fidelity of presentment.

The Latin text is reproduced on alternate pages, in order to furnish opportunity for comparison with the English rendering. Those who will have made that comparison may see for themselves how close the translator has come to his aim, or by how much he has missed it.

THE TRANSLATOR

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Ardent desire for truth and happiness was the fundamental trait of St. Augustine's thought from his earliest youth: "Truth, Truth, how inwardly did the very marrow of my soul sigh for Thee."¹

Equally impassioned was his craving for happiness which he first tried to find in the goods of the material world. But the perishable and the finite things could not hold him. This restless soul found repose only in God, the Supreme Truth and Good. It was from profound practical experience that, at the end of a long errant journey, he wrote: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it rest in Thee."²

At last, St. Augustine had sufficiently matured to see this truth. He had tried several contemporary interpretations of life and sought in their light the solution of perennial human problems. After he had discovered that the doctrine of the Manicheans, who had attracted him by their clamorous claim of truth, was confused and pernicious materialism, he became acquainted with the skepticism of the New Academy. Like many others before and after, this young seeker after truth may well have been occasionally tempted to despair of the existence of truth and a rational meaning of the world. He himself confessed that skepticism had threatened to rob him of his interest and energy.³

Although Augustine had been engaged in scholarly pursuits from his earliest youth, he had, up to the time of his conversion, produced no literary work except an essay, *De*

1 *Conf.*, III, 6, 10.

2 *Ibid.*, I, 1, 1.

3 *Contra Academicos*, II, 9, 23.

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pulchro et apto, which he composed while he was a teacher of rhetoric in Carthage about 382. He was then 26 or 27 years of age. According to St. Augustine's *Confessions*, this little work was lost very early.⁴ But when the turmoil in his soul gave way to calm order, and his despair vanished before the assurance of the possibility of attaining truth,⁵ his enthusiasm for this high ideal made him take that turn in his life through which he became not only the greatest Doctor of the Church but also one of the most profound philosophers and most prolific writers in history.

St. Augustine was so zealously devoted to his professorial duties at Milan that, after his first two years, signs appeared that his delicate health could not stand up for long under the strain of his work. Besides this danger to his health, it was, above all, the spiritual revolution within him which made him plan to quit Milan and his post. He informed his closest friends of his intentions, among them his colleague Verecundus, who was a teacher of the fine arts. Out of sincere friendship Verecundus offered St. Augustine his villa, Cassiciacum, where he might retire for rest, leisure, prayerful meditation and reflection.

There, in the short space of five or six months, from the autumn of 386 until early in 387, he wrote a number of important treatises. "What I there [at Cassiciacum] did in writing . . . my books may witness, as well what I debated with others, as what with myself alone before Thee."⁶ Out of the solitude of the villa came four philosophical works: *Contra Academicos*, in which St. Augustine advances the thesis, against the skepticism of the New Academy, that knowledge exists, that the certain cognition of truth cannot be withheld from man; *De beata vita*,⁷ which proves

⁴ *Conf.*, IV, 13-15, 20-27.

⁵ Cf. *Contra Academicos*, III, 20, 43.

⁶ *Conf.*, IX, 4, 7.

⁷ *The Happy Life (De Beata Vita)* by Aurelius Augustine. Translated and annotated by L. Schopp, St. Louis and London, B. Herder Book Co., 1939.

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that true happiness consists in the knowledge and possession of God; *De Ordine*,⁸ which treats of the order in the universe and especially of the place and meaning of evil in the divine plan. According to the *Retractationes* (I, 4), these three dialogues were followed by the *Soliloquies*,⁹ containing philosophical meditations about the means for arriving at supernatural truths, with special reference to God and the soul.¹⁰

The books written at Cassiciacum received their notable charm not only from content and form but also from the circumstances attending their composition. The farm which Verecundus offered St. Augustine as a refuge seems to have been a spacious and pleasant villa such as was the fashion among the wealthy Romans of the empire: wide airy rooms, baths, a library, vine-clad pergolas, terraces and trees to shade the lawn. The windows provided a view of the peaceful countryside framed by the distant slopes of the Alps. A small band of philosophers moved into this idyl one day in the fall of 386. They were, besides Augustine and his noble mother Monica, his brother Navigius,

8 *Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil*, A Translation of St. Augustine's *De Ordine*, with annotations, by Robert P. Russell, O.S.A., New York, Cosmopolitan Science and Art Service Co., Inc., 1942.

9 By Th. Gilligan, O.S.A., New York, Cosmopolitan Science and Art Service Co. The *Soliloquies* are a unique type of dialogue. St. Augustine's interlocutor is *Ratio* (reason) which guides him in his search. (Cf. L. Schopp-A. Dyroff, *Aurelius Augustinus: Selbstgespräche*, München, 1938, p. 8.)

10 Augustine deals in the *Soliloquies* also with the immortality of the soul, but promises (*Solil.* II, 19, 33) a more extensive treatment of this question in an "aliud volumen." This he presented in *De immortalitate animae* written after his return to Milan, shortly before his baptism (387). At the same time he began work on an encyclopedic exposition of the seven liberal arts, of which only the six books *De musica* were completed. During his stay in Rome (387/88), he composed *De quantitate animae*, which deals with the spiritual nature of the soul. Furthermore, St. Augustine began working in Rome on *De libero arbitrio*, which he finished in Africa. There also was written his last strictly philosophical book, *De magistro*.

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and his son Adeodatus, his cousins Lastidianus and Rusticus, his friend Alypius and his two students Licentius¹¹ and Trygetius, whose instruction he wished to continue.

After an interval of 35 years Augustine tells in retrospect that his chief need at that time was the removal of all doubt of the possibility of finding truth: "Therefore at the beginning of my conversion I wrote three books so that those things which blocked my way at the threshold, might not prove an obstacle to me."¹² "The three books against the Academics" were, then, Augustine's farewell letter to the philosophy which he had followed last, a philosophy that had the aim to justify doubt as to one's ultimate attitude. Accordingly, he endeavored to raise up an unbreakable dam against the destructive floods of skepticism, and advances arguments appropriate to serve as "Answer to Skeptics" at all times. The work is dedicated to his helpful friend Romanianus.

It is characteristic of Augustine that his discussion begins not with an analysis of the source of knowledge, but with the question whether the possession of truth or the mere quest of it is necessary and sufficient for happiness. Licentius, aided by Alypius, undertakes to defend the Academics, while Trygetius, with the assistance of Augustine, refutes their claim. Licentius proposes the thesis that the very search for truth brings real happiness; for wisdom or life according to reason, and man's spiritual perfection—which are the basis of happiness—consist, in this life at least, not in the possession, but in the faithful and unceasing quest, of truth.¹³

11 Licentius was the son of Romanianus, Augustine's patron.

12 *Enchiridion*, 20, 7. St. Augustine states also in his *Retractationes* that the arguments of the Academics caused many to doubt the possibility of real knowledge. Here he certainly refers also to his own experience.

13 Like G. E. Lessing, many modern thinkers also declare the search for truth to be more satisfying than its possession as the latter is thought to mean the standstill of all intellectual activity. This, of course, is due to a misunderstanding of what the term

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Trygetius counters with a statement that the possession of truth is indispensable for happiness because constant search without ever finding it is tantamount to erring. Licentius, however, makes the distinction that error is the approval of what is false instead of what is true: search, he declares, is not error but wisdom. It is, he says, the straight way of life by which man extricates his spirit as much as possible from the bonds of the body, rendering himself thus worthy of the attainment of the last goal, in order to enjoy divine happiness then as he enjoys human happiness now.

In his own contribution to the discussion, Augustine urges that, without knowing truth, likelihood could not be had either, because what is likely (*veri-simile*) can be judged only in the light of what is actually true (*verum*). Probability fares no better, since a thing to be probable, *i.e.*, approvable, must be known in its true reality. Later in the dialogue he remarks that nobody could be wise without wisdom. But every definition of wisdom which omits the idea of knowledge, and places wisdom in the mere confession of ignorance and suspense of one's approval, is equivalent to identifying wisdom with the unreal and the false; and it is untenable. If, then, knowledge is an essential part of wisdom it is also a necessary element of happiness, because only the wise can be truly happy. This playing with the name wisdom, without a knowledge of truth, is sheer deception practiced on misguided followers who always seek and never find, and in the end curse their leaders.¹⁴

"possession of truth" implies. It does not mean the possession of the totality of all knowable truth but the gradual discovery and combination of fragments of truth so as to attain to an increasingly perfect knowledge without reaching an exhaustive grasp of its totality.

14 In *De vera religione* (102) which was written a few years later (about 390) St. Augustine argues for this position again: "Unhappy are those men to whom the possession of knowledge is indifferent, and who rejoicing in novelty prefer to learn rather than to know, although knowledge is the end of learning. Un-

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For the purpose of overthrowing skepticism once and for all, St. Augustine reviews the various fields of knowledge in order to find truths that are immediately evident and absolutely certain, truths of universal validity and practical application. He calls these truths *veritates* or *rationes aeternae* because they are beyond time and are subject to no change. Such truths St. Augustine finds, first of all, in the field of *logic* or, as he calls it with Plato, *dialectics*. The first of these evident truths which he mentions is the disjunctive proposition: "I am certain that the world is either a unit or not a unit, and that if it is not a unit, it is either finite in number or it is infinite."¹⁵ "If the elements in the world are four, they are not five. If there is but one sun, there are not two. One soul cannot both die and be immortal. A man cannot be at the same time happy and miserable. It cannot be both day and night. At the present we are either asleep or awake. What I seem to myself to see, either is or is not a body."¹⁶

Even the most radical skepticism cannot undermine the bulwark of such truths as these. "Now these truths are respective opposites; and no one can confuse them by any likeness to falsity."¹⁷ The absolute truth of these propositions rests on their independence from all experience, bearing as they do the reason of their validity within themselves. "Through dialectic I have learned that these things are true—as well as many other things, which it would be very tedious to enumerate—true in themselves, however our senses may be affected."¹⁸ The above quotations show that St. Augustine especially urges the principle of contradiction against skepticism. Since this presupposes and indirectly contains the other two

happy, too, are those who, holding cheap their ready art, prefer the contest to victory, although victory is the end of the contest."

¹⁵ *Contra Academicos*, III, 10, 23.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 13, 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, III, 10, 23.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, III, 13, 29.

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logical principles—the principles of identity and of excluded middle—we may well say that St. Augustine defends here the principles of logic as the inviolable foundations of knowledge, even though they are not formulated in technical terminology.

Side by side with logic we find the truths of *mathematics*. “If there are one world and six worlds, it is clear that there are seven worlds, no matter how I may be affected. And, with all due modesty, I maintain that I know this . . . , the fact that three times three are nine, and that this is the square of intelligible numbers: this is necessarily true, even if the whole human race were fast asleep.”¹⁹ All these truths are necessarily and unconditionally true; they cannot be contested.²⁰

Other groups of indubitable truths were discovered by St. Augustine also in the fields of *ethics* and *esthetics*. “Again, will you not acknowledge that it is most true that we ought to live most justly; that things less excellent are to be subordinate to things more excellent; that like things are to be compared to like; that to every one is to be given what belongs to him: and that the evidence of the foregoing is common to me and to you and to all who see it?”²¹

Here it is a question of the highest norms by which we judge all things as good or evil. The same is true of the highest laws of esthetics according to which things are called beautiful or ugly. According to St. Augustine, they are related to the mathematical and ethical laws. “For

19 *Ibid.*, III, 11, 25.

20 In his later writings St. Augustine emphasizes, among the principles of mathematics, the geometrical theorems as indubitable truths of an *a priori* character. Cf. *Soliloquia*, I, 4, 9: “Wherefore, it seems to me that one can more easily navigate a ship on dry land than one can perceive mathematics by means of the senses.” And *De immortalitate animae*, 4, 6: “What, indeed is so everlasting as the idea of the circle, or anything else in arts of this kind? It is not grasped by the mind as something that at one time was not, or at any time will not be.”

21 *De libero arbitrio*, II, 10, 28.

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wherever you turn yourself wisdom speaks to you by certain marks which it has impressed upon its works; and, when you fall back upon outward things, by the very forms of the outer it recalls you to that which is within. So that whatever is delightful to you in a body, and attracts through the senses of the body, you can see is subject to number, and you can ask whence it comes, and you can return into yourself, and you can understand that you cannot approve or disapprove that which you touch by the senses of the body unless you have in you *certain laws of beauty*, to which you refer whatever things beautiful you see without.”²²

The discovery of the *a priori* principles of logic and mathematics, ethics and esthetics, means for St. Augustine the conquest of skepticism. He does not reach this position by languidly and resignedly assigning to authority (*auctoritas*) the place of a failing reason (*ratio*). Both, *i.e.*, reason and authority, are for him equally absolute sources of knowledge *sui iuris*.

It is the great merit of St. Augustine that he recalls the marvelous cognitive power of reason against prevailing skepticism. Equally emphatic, however, are his statements on reason's insufficiency to answer the deepest questions of life. Man is in need of divine instruction; reason must be aided by faith, there are truths which man can never know apart from revealed faith. Before God, St. Augustine professes his humble submission to divine authority, and praises God's providence for the appearance of the divine wisdom on earth in Christ. This is the consoling note on which the work *Contra Academicos* closes: "And now—so that you may grasp my whole meaning in a few words—whatever may be the nature of human wisdom, I see that I have not yet understood it. Nevertheless, although I am now in my thirty-third year of age, I do not think that I ought

²² *Ibid.*, II, 16, 41.

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to despair of attaining it some time; for, despising all other things which mortals consider good, I have resolved to devote myself to an investigation of it. And whereas the reasonings of the Academicians were seriously deterring me from this undertaking, I am now, I believe, sufficiently protected against those reasons by this disputation. Indeed no one doubts that we are impelled towards knowledge by a twofold powerful force—the force of authority and the force of reason. And I am resolved never to deviate in the least from the authority of Christ, for I find none more powerful.”²³

On the question of the possibility of knowing universal and necessary truths St. Augustine follows Neo-Platonism. He accepts the doctrine of the existence of an intelligible world accessible only to the intellect, a world of ideas in the sense of Plato,²⁴ with the modification that it fitted into the Christian view of God and creation; thus he declared the rigid world of Plato's immobile ideas as the creative thoughts of a personal God, not of an impersonal divine intellect. The *rationes aeternae* are the thoughts of the living God who designs and decrees the nature of all created things. From the unchangeableness and timelessness of the truths (*incommutabiliter vera*) St. Augustine reaches the conclusion of the existence of an unchangeable or eternal essential Truth (*veritas incommutabilis*), i.e., God. The human mind cannot guarantee the universality and permanency of these *a priori* truths:

23 *Contra Academicos*, III, 20, 43.

24 According to St. Augustine, the kingdom of the intelligible world (*res intelligibiles*) contains the most general and fundamental concepts of the sciences. In logic and metaphysics they are concepts like truth, similarity, falsity, unity, eternity (cf. *Soliloquia*, I, 15, 27; *De vera Religione*, 66; *De diversis quaestionibus* 83, qu. 23); in ethics: besides the basic concept of the good (*bonitas*), those of wisdom, chastity, justice (cf. *De libero arbitrio*, II, 19, 52; *De diversis quaestionibus* 83, qu. 23); in esthetics, the fundamental concept of beauty (cf. *De diversis quaestionibus* 83, qu. 23); finally the principles of mathematics.

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"Wherefore you can in no way deny that there is an immutable truth, containing all those things that are immutably true, which [truth] you cannot say to be your own or mine; nor can you say that it belongs to any man, but that it is present, and in wonderful ways exhibits itself in common as an unseen and universal light to all that discern things immutably true."²⁵ Accordingly, truth stands above the individual, even above all rational creatures. It is then ultimately established in God as the source from which its universal and unchangeable principles flow or radiate into the human mind. Christian philosophy has retained St. Augustine's doctrine of God as the eternal truth. Further, his interpretation of rational knowledge as, basically, vision or seeing in the light of God, influenced many thinkers; but this theory lost its ascendancy through the rise of the Aristotelian-Thomistic doctrine of abstraction.

In his analysis of the skeptic position St. Augustine discovers yet another argument, which is lacking here but is developed in his later writings. As it proved of fundamental importance for his philosophical speculation, it may be well to indicate it here briefly. The argument is based on an analysis of the implications of consciousness. Consciousness provides the irrefutable certainty of one's existence, regardless of all other doubts and uncertainties.²⁶ In the *Soliloquies* he adds: "Hence you know you exist; you know you live; you know you understand."²⁷ In the *De Trinitate* this thought is expanded: "Who ever doubts that he himself lives, and remembers, and understands, and wills, and thinks, and knows, and judges? Seeing that even if he doubts, he lives; if he doubts, he remembers why he doubts; if he doubts, he understands that he doubts; if he doubts, he wishes to be certain; if he

25 *De libero arbitrio*, II, 12, 33.

26 *De beata vita*, 2, 7.

27 *Soliloquia*, II, 1, 1.

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doubts, he thinks; if he doubts, he knows that he does not know; if he doubts, he judges that he ought not to assent rashly. Whosoever therefore doubts about anything else, ought not to doubt of all these things; which if they were not, he would not be able to doubt anything."²⁸ In *De vera Religione* he says: "Or if you do not understand what I say, and doubt whether this is true, consider at least whether you do not doubt your own doubts about this matter; and if it is certain that you are doubting, ask yourself whence it is certain. . . . Every man who recognizes that he is doubting, recognizes a truth, and he is certain of this fact which he recognizes; therefore he is certain of a truth. Therefore every man who doubts whether truth exists, carries in himself a truth why he should not doubt."²⁹ With these arguments, drawn from the certainty of consciousness, St. Augustine's *Si enim fallor, sum*³⁰ has anticipated by more than a thousand years Descartes' *Cogito, ergo sum*.

The literary form of the *Contra Academicos* is the dialogue. The Christian writers accepted this literary device, which lends itself so well to philosophical controversy, from the ancients and employed it for their own purposes. Thus it is to be expected that both the structure and style of the Christian dialogue are determined by a tradition of its predecessor. The first of the Christian dialogues in Latin is Minucius Felix's *Octavius*. Its construction and style possesses a charm and perfection which were not again attained by its successors. Considerable time elapsed before another Christian dialogue in Latin was composed. Toward the end of the fourth century,³¹ in 383, St. Jerome wrote *Altercatio Luciferani et Orthodoxi*, a dialogue be-

28 *De Trinitate*, X, 10, 14.

29 *De vera Religione*, 73.

30 *De civ. Dei*, XI, 26.

31 The dialogue *Symposium* by Lactantius belongs probably to the pagan period of his life and is not preserved.

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tween an adherent of the schismatic bishop, Lucifer of Calaris, and an orthodox believer; and in 415 he produced his great *Dialogus contra Pelagianos*. With St. Augustine, the Latin Christian dialogue reaches a new period of flowering. His dialogues are distinguished by their close contact with life. There is a personal note running through them all, which makes them realistic and true. This raises the question: to what extent may St. Augustine's dialogues be classed as historical? The answer is simpler as regards the later period. We have, *e.g.*, the minutes of the public disputation which St. Augustine held with the Manichean presbyter Fortunatus at Hippo in 392.³²

This is a truthful report of an actual disputation. As to the earlier dialogues, R. Hirzel is probably right when he says: "They condense a number of actual conversations such as he had especially in Cassiciacum, into something like finished treatises."³³ This view does not exclude the possibility that whole sections are *verbatim* transcriptions of conversations taken down by the *notarius*. St. Augustine had become acquainted with the tradition of the dialogue literature through Cicero and Varro, by whom he was greatly influenced. Especially well known is the influence of Cicero's *Hortensius* from the year 373 onward. But St. Augustine's genius does not slavishly imitate; it is independent and creative. The reader of *Contra Academicos* soon feels the actual contest of living interlocutors, which gives the exposition a dramatic character. St. Augustine is not only a master of exposition but also of the word by making language the immediate expression of his emotions. Thus

32 *Acta seu Disputatio contra Fortunatum*: Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 42, 111-130.

33 *Der Dialog. Ein literarhistorischer Versuch* (Leipzig, 1895), II, 377; cf. D. Ohlmann, *De S. Augustini dialogis in Cassiciaco scriptis*, Strassburg, 1897, who more emphatically than Hirzel believes these dialogues to be *verbatim* records of actual conversations.

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the work has also esthetical value which makes it a part of the world's great literature.³⁴

Possidius, friend and biographer of St. Augustine, says that, through his writings, he is living on in the heart of the faithful.³⁵ Indeed, St. Augustine is not dead. He has fought many a battle of the Church through the centuries. The way by which Aurelius Augustine, the seeker after truth, came to God is even today the only route by which many moderns will find true and eternal peace. With this in mind we quote St. Augustine's words: *Tolle-lege*: "Take and read" (*Confessiones*, VIII, 12, 29) to recommend to the reader the first work of "the first modern man."

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34 Cf. W. Thimme's excellent article "Literarisch-ästhetische Bemerkungen zu den Dialogen Augustins," in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 29, 1908, pp. 1-21.

35 *Vita S. Aurelii Augustini*, 31.

DIALOGI PERSONAE

Augustine—Born at Tagaste¹ in Numidia in 354; professor of rhetoric at Carthage, at Rome, and at Milan; an earnest and indefatigable searcher for truth; converted to Christianity at Milan in 386; ordained to the priesthood at Hippo² in 391; consecrated bishop in 395; became bishop of Hippo in 396; died at Hippo, August 28, 430.

He is the author of ninety-three extant works in two hundred and thirty-two books, of which the first is the *Contra Academicos*, and of which the most celebrated are the *Confessions*, *Trinity*, and *City of God*.

Alypius—Augustine's fellow townsman and intimate friend; talented, highly educated, and an ex-judge; converted to Christianity with Augustine, he became Bishop of Tagaste, and, later, Primate of Numidia.

Navigius—Augustine's brother; was present at the discussions, but took little part in them; was present at the death of his mother, St. Monica, at Ostia; returned to Africa with Augustine the following year.

Licentius—The son of Romanianus:³ entrusted to Augustine's tutorship; passionately devoted to poetry. A letter of Paulinus of Nola makes it appear that in 396 Licentius was living at Hippo, was not yet a Christian, and was a source of anxiety to his father and to Augustine.⁴

Trygetius—A native of Tagaste, and one of Augustine's pupils at Cassiciacum.

1 The present-day SoukAhras in Algeria.

2 The modern Bone, in Algeria.

3 See note 2, page 242.

4 *Epist.* XXXII, *Inter Augustinianas*.

BOOK I

CONTRA ACADEMICOS

LIBER PRIMUS

CAPUT I

1. O utinam, Romaniane, hominem sibi aptum ita vicissim virtus fortunae repugnanti posset auferre, ut ab ea sibi auferri neminem patitur! jam tibi profecto injecisset manum, suique juris te esse proclamans, et in bonorum certissimorum possessionem traducens, ne prosperis quidem casibus servire permetteret. Sed quoniam ita comparatum est, sive pro meritis nostris, sive pro necessitate naturae,² ut divinum animum mortalibus inhaerentem, nequaquam sapientiae portus accipiat, ubi neque adversante fortunae flatu, neque secundante moveatur; nisi eo illum fortuna ipsa, vel secunda, vel quasi adversa perducatur: nihil pro te

1 Qui heic excuditur textus, e textu editionis Benedictinae alterius (Parisiis, MDCCCXXXVI) desumptus est. Lectiones variantes adnotantur, prout inveniuntur apud

Am. i.e. Editionem Amerbachii, Basileae, 1489.

Bad. i.e. Editionem Badii, Parisiis, 1502.

Er. i.e. Editionem Erasmi, Basileae, 1529.

Lov. i.e. Editionem Lovaniensem, Antuerpiae, 1662.

Par. i.e. Editionem Parisiensem, 1520.

P. B. i.e. Editionem Benedictinam, Bassani, 1807.

Ven. i.e. Editionem Venetam, 1584.

Vic. i.e. Mss. codices Victorinos tres.

2 *Retractationes*, lib. I, cap. I, n. 2.

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BOOK I

CHAPTER I

1. O Romanianus,² would that from the grasp of stubborn fortune, virtue could snatch a man fitted for herself, just as surely as she suffers no man to be snatched away from her by fortune.³ In that case she would long ago have laid hand on you, and proclaimed you to be rightfully hers. She would have led you to the possession of the most reliable kind of goods; and she would not have suffered you to be a slave to transitory things—even to those of fairest promise. But, either in accordance with our own merits or by virtue of nature's law,⁴ it is so appointed that the divine mind indwelling in mortals,⁵ shall never gain entry to the port of wisdom—where it cannot be tossed about by either a favoring breeze or an adverse gale of fortune—unless Fortune herself⁶ lead it thereto, either by

1 See note 1, page 241.

2 Note 2, page 242.

3 "... fortune plays an insignificant role in the life of a wise man." Cicero, *de fin.* I, xix, 63. Cf. note 3, page 244.

4 Cf. *Retractations*, Bk. I, ch. I, no. 2. See page 233.

5 "The human mind, being an offshoot from the divine reason, can be compared with nothing else than God himself, if such comparison is allowed." Cicero, *Tusculan. Quaest.*, V, xiii, 38. Cf. *id.*, I, xv, 33; *De fin.*, II, xxxiv, 114; *Laelius*, iv, 13; *Cato M.*, xxi, 77.

Plato calls the body a tomb and a prison of the soul. Cf. *Gorgias*, 493A; *Cratylus*, 400C.

Plotinus represents the soul as confined in the shackles of the body. Cf. *Enneads*, II, ix, 7; IV, viii, 4. See note 4, page 245.

6 Cf. *Retract.*, *loc. cit.*

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nobis aliud quam vota restant, quibus ab illo cui haec curae sunt Deo, si possumus, impetremus ut te tibi reddat; ita enim facile reddet et nobis; sinatque mentem illam tuam, quae respirationem jam diu parturit, aliquando in auras verae libertatis emergere. Etenim fortasse quae vulgo fortuna nominatur, occulto quodam ordine regitur; nihilque aliud in rebus casum vocamus, nisi cujus ratio et causa secreta est:³ nihilque seu commodi seu incommodi contingit in parte, quod non conveniat et congruat universo. Quam sententiam uberrimarum doctrinarum oraculis editam, remotamque longissime ab intellectu profanorum, se demonstraturam veris amatoribus suis, ad quam te invito, philosophia pollicetur. Quamobrem, cum tibi tuo animo indigna multa accidunt; ne te ipse contemnas. Nam si divina providentia pertenditur usque ad nos, quod minime dubitandum est; mihi crede, sic tecum agi oportet ut agitur. Nam cum tanta, quantam semper admiror, indole tua, ab ineunte adolescentia adhuc infirmo rationis atque lapsante vestigio humanam vitam errorum omnium plenissimam ingredereris; excepit te circumfluentia divitiarum, quae illam aetatem atque animum, quae pulchra et honesta

3 *Ibid.*

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manifest favor or by seeming adversity. Wherefore, nothing remains for us in your behalf except prayers to the God who has those things in His care—to the end that, if it is possible, we may obtain from Him that He restore you to yourself. And in doing that, He will readily restore you to us also. We pray that He permit your mind—which has long been gasping for breath—to emerge, at length, into the pure air of true liberty. But perhaps what is commonly called fortune, is itself governed by a certain hidden order. And what we call a matter of chance, may be only something whose why and wherefore are concealed.⁷ And perhaps nothing fitting or unfitting happens in a part, which is not suited and advantageous to the whole. I am inviting you to a philosophy which offers to demonstrate to her true lovers this import of most copious doctrines—an import which has been divinely proclaimed, but which is ever so remote from the intellect of the profane.⁸ Wherefore, when many things unworthy of your mind befall you, do not condemn yourself; for, if divine Providence reaches even unto us—and, believe me, this is not to be doubted⁹—it is opportune for you to be treated just as you are being treated. For instance, notwithstanding the fact that even in your teens, when reason's step is weak and faltering, you—with that disposition of yours, which is such as I always admire—were beginning to practice philanthropy, Providence nevertheless rescued you from an affluence of worldly wealth; for that mode of life is replete with all kinds of error. In fact, that affluence was already beginning to engulf in its seductive whirlpools both your youth itself

7 *Id. ibid.*

8 At this time, Augustine believed that with a few verbal emendations Platonism could be reconciled with Christian teachings. Cf. note 4, page 245.

9 From his childhood days, Augustine never ceased to believe in the operations of divine Providence. (*Conf.* VI, v, 8) It is the theme of his *De ordine*, a philosophic dialogue composed during an interval in the composition of the *Contra Academicos*. English translation by Rev. Robert P. Russell, O.S.A., New York, 1942.

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videbantur avide sequentem, illecebrosis coeperat absorbere gurgitibus, nisi inde te fortunae illi flatus, qui putantur adversi, eripuissent pene mergentem.

2. An vero si edentem te munera ursorum⁴ et nunquam ibi antea visa spectacula civibus nostris, theatricus plausus semper prosperrimus accepisset; si stultorum hominum, quorum immensa turba est, conflatis et consentientibus vocibus ferreris ad coelum; si nemo tibi auderet esse inimicus; si municipales tabulae te non solum civium, sed etiam vicinorum patronum aere signarent; collocarentur statuae, influerent honores, adderentur etiam potestates, quae municipalem habitum supercrescerent; conviviiis quotidianis mensae opimae struerentur; quod cuique esset necesse, quod cujusque etiam deliciae sitirent, indubitanter peteret, indubitanter hauriret, multa etiam non petentibus fundarentur; resque ipsa familiaris diligenter a tuis fideliterque administrata, idoneam se tantis sumptibus paratamque praeberet: tu interea viveres in aedificiorum exquisitissimis molibus, in nitore balnearum, in tesseriis quas honestas non respuit, in venatibus, in conviviiis, in ore clientium, in ore civium, in ore denique populorum humanissimus, liberalissimus, mundissimus, fortunatissimus, ut fuisti,⁵ jactareris: quisquam tibi, Romaniane, beatae alterius vitae, quae sola beata est, quisquam, quaeso, mentionem facere auderet?

4 Bad. *munera cursorum*. Sed alii cdd. summo inter se consensu habent, *ursorum*. Inusitatum quodpiam ludorum genus hic nominare voluit Augustinus. Ludos nempe, quia liberaliter populo munerum instar exhibebantur, munera vocabant. Hinc de ludis praestitis non male intelligitur concilii Eliberitani can. 3: "Flamines qui non immolaverint: sed munus tantum dederint, etc."

5 In mss. aliquot vetustis, et in Bad. Am. Er. deest *ut fuisti*. In aliis septem mss. substituitur *ut suesti*; quae lectio forte hoc verior est, quo ab usu vulgato remotior.

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and that mind of yours, which was eagerly pursuing what it believed to be the upright and honorable, if those seemingly adverse gales of fortune had not snatched you away when you were almost sinking.

2. For, if the ever enthusiastic applause of the circus¹⁰ were always greeting you as you were providing public exhibitions of bear-baiting and spectacles never previously seen there by our citizens; if you were being raised to the heavens by the united and concordant voices of fools, whose uproar is beyond all measure; if no one would dare to be your enemy; if municipal records were to inscribe it in bronze that you were a patron not only of the citizens but also of neighboring peoples—then, indeed, statues would be erected, honors would be pouring in, rare privileges would be showered on you by municipalities, sumptuous tables would be laden for daily banquets, everyone would confidently request whatever he needed and would devour whatever his pleasure craved, many gifts would be showered even on those who were not seeking them, your household would be diligently cared for by your slaves and would display itself fit and ready for such great expenses; and meanwhile, you would be living in a most pretentious mansion, in the splendor of the bathing halls, in irreprehensible games of chance, in huntings and in feastings; and by the voices of clients, citizens and the populace, you would be continually spoken of as most philanthropic, generous, refined and fortunate, as indeed you have been. But I ask you, Romanianus, who would then dare to remind you of the other happy life, the only happy life?¹¹

10 In his youth, Augustine was enamored of the theatre, but he seems to have always had an abhorrence of the circus. (Cf. *Confessions*, Bk. III, ch. VII, no. 12).

11 The subject of Augustine's *De beata vita*, composed at the same time as the *Contra Academicos*. There is an English translation by Rev. F. E. Tourscher, O.S.A., published under the title, *Happiness—A Study*, Philadelphia, 1937

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quisquam tibi persuadere posset, non solum te felicem non esse; sed eo maxime miserum, quo tibi minime videris? Nunc vero quam te breviter admonendum tot et tanta, quae pertulisti, adversa fecerunt? Non enim tibi alienis exemplis persuadendum est quam fluxa et fragilia, et plena calamitatum sint omnia, quae bona mortales putant; cum ita ex aliqua parte bene expertus sis, ut ex te caeteris persuadere possimus.

3. Illud ergo, illud tuum, quo semper decora et honesta desiderasti; quo te liberalem magis quam divitem esse maluisti; quo nunquam concupisti esse potentior quam justior, numquam adversitatibus improbitatibusque cessisti: illud ipsum, inquam, quod in te divinum nescio quo vitae hujus somno veternoque sopitum est, variis illis durisque jactationibus secreta providentia excitare decrevit. Evigila, evigila, oro te; multum, mihi crede, gratulaberis quod pene nullis prosperitatibus quibus tenentur incauti, mundi hujus tibi dona blandita sunt: quae me ipsum capere maliebantur quotidie ista cantantem, nisi me pectoris dolor ventosam professionem abjicere et in philosophiae gremium confugere coegisset. Ipsa me nunc in otio, quod vehementer optavimus, nutrit ac fovet: ipsa me penibus ad illa superstitione, in quam te mecum praeci-

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Who could then persuade you, not only that you were not happy, but that you were extremely miserable precisely because you believed that you were by no means miserable? But now, the many great misfortunes you have suffered, have made it unnecessary to admonish you at any great length; for it is not by the example of others that you are to be persuaded how fleeting and fragile and calamitous are all the things which mortals believe to be good. Rather, to a certain extent at least, you have so fully experienced it that from you we are able to persuade others.

3. Therefore, by those various harsh reverses, a hidden providence has decreed to arouse that divine faculty of yours, which has been, as it were, benumbed in you by some kind of sleep and lethargy of this life—the faculty by which you have ever sought after beauty and goodness, by which you have preferred to be generous rather than rich, by which you have never yearned to be powerful rather than just, and by which you have never yielded to misfortunes and deceits. Arouse yourself, I pray you. Arouse yourself. Believe me, you will be very glad that the fortunes of this life have caressed you with scarcely any of the successes by which the unwary are trammelled. Those very things used to sap my own strength day by day when I was singing their praises, until a soreness of the chest¹² compelled me to give up the bombastic profession,¹³ and to flee to the bosom of philosophy.¹⁴ And now, in the leisure which we have always desired,¹⁵ it sustains and comforts me. It has completely liberated me from that superstition into which I

12 Note 5, page 249.

13 Augustine seldom fails to reveal a kind of resentment towards anything that fostered or occasioned his youthful pride and ambition. He seems to bewail his early success in grammar and rhetoric: he speaks disdainfully of grammarians and rhetoricians. Cf. *Confessions*, III, iii, 6; III, iv, 7; I, xiii, 22; IX, ii, 2.

14 Cf. Note 6, page 250.

15 Cf. *Confessions*, VI, xiv, 24.

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pitem dederam, liberavit. Ipsa enim docet, et vere docet nihil omnino colendum esse, totumque contemni oportere, quidquid mortalibus oculis cernitur, quidquid ullus sensus attingit.⁶ Ipsa verissimum et secretissimum Deum perspicue se demonstraturam promittit, et jam jamque quasi per lucidas nubes ostentare dignatur.

4. In hac mecum studiosissime vivit noster Licentius: ad eam totus a juvenilibus illecebris voluptatibusque conversus est, ita ut eum non temere patri audeam imitandum proponere. Philosophia est enim, a cujus uberibus se nulla aetas queretur⁷ excludi; ad quam avidius retinendam et hauriendam quo te incitarem, quamvis tuam sitim bene noverim, gustum tamen mittere volui, quem tibi suavisimum, et ut ita dicam, inductorium fore, peto ne frustra speraverim. Nam disputationem quas inter se Trygetius et Licentius habuerunt, relatam in litteras, tibi misi. Illum enim quoque adolescentem, quasi ad detergendum fastidium disciplinarum aliquantum sibi usurpasset militia, ita nobis magnarum honestarumque artium ardentissimum edacissimumque restituit. Pauculis igitur diebus transactis, posteaquam in agro vivere coepimus, cum eos ad studia hortans atque animans, ultra quam optaveram paratos et prorsus inhiantes viderem, volui tentare pro aetate quid possent: praesertim cum Hortensius liber Ciceronis jam

6 *Retract.* lib. I, cap. I, n. 2.

7 *Lov. queritur.*

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had thrown you headlong with myself.¹⁶ It teaches—and rightly so—that we ought to have no concern for anything that can be discerned by mortal eyes, or reached by any of the senses,¹⁷ but rather that all such things are to be disregarded. It promises to give a lucid demonstration of the most true and distinct God; and even now it deigns to furnish a glimpse of Him, as it were, through transparent clouds.¹⁸

4. Our Licentius is most diligently living in it with me. So wholeheartedly has he turned towards it, and away from the alluring pleasures of youth, that I can safely propose him as a model for his father. It is indeed a philosophy from whose breasts no age will have reason to complain that it is excluded. And although I am well aware of your thirst for it, I have nevertheless decided to send you a foretaste, in order to incite you to hold fast to it and to drink of it the more eagerly. I hope—and, I beg you, let me not hope in vain—that you will find it most pleasant and, as it were, inviting. Accordingly, I have sent you, in written form, a disputation which Trygetius and Licentius have had with each other. Indeed the military service—as if it had taken him away just to purge him of his dislike for studies—has restored to us a Trygetius full of eagerness and avidity for the high and noble arts. So, within a few days after our arrival at the villa,¹⁹ when—while I was exhorting and encouraging them towards studies—I saw that they were ready and eager even beyond my hopes, I decided to test their abilities in proportion to their age. A special reason for this decision arose from the fact that Cicero's book, *Hortensius*,²⁰ seemed to have in large meas-

16 Manichaeism. Cf. *id.* IV, i, 1; VII, ii, 3; VII, xii, *sqq.*

17 Cf. *Retract.*, *ibid.*

18 Cf. *Confessions*, VII, xx *sqq.*

19 Cassiciacum. Cf. notes 7, 8, pp. 251-2.

20 Cf. Note 3, page 244.

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eos ex magna parte conciliasse philosophiae videretur. Adhibito itaque notario, ne aurae laborem nostrum discernerent, nihil perire permisi. Sane in hoc libro res et sententias illorum, mea vero et Alypii etiam verba lecturus es.

II

5. Cum igitur omnes hortatu meo unum in locum ad hoc congregati essemus, ubi opportunum visum est: Numquidnam dubitatis, inquam, verum nos scire oportere? Minime, ait Trygetius: caeterique se vultu ipso approbasse significaverunt. Quid si, inquam, etiam non comprehensum vero beati esse possumus; necessariam veri comprehensionem arbitramini? Hic Alypius: Hujus quaestionis, inquit, judicem me tutius puto. Cum enim iter mihi in urbem sit constitutum, oportet me onere alicujus suscipiendae partis relevari; simul quod facilius judicis partes, quam cujusquam defensoris, cuipiam delegare possim. Quare dehinc pro alterutra parte ne a me quidquam ex-

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ure already won them over to philosophy. Then, having employed a stenographer *lest the winds disperse our labors*,²¹ I suffered nothing to be lost. What you will find in this written disputation are truly the ideas and opinions of those two youths, though the words are mine and those of Alypius.

21 Virgil, *Aeneid*, Bk. IX, v. 312.

CHAPTER II

5. Therefore, when at my urging we were all assembled¹ at a place which seemed suitable for this purpose, I ask:

Have you any doubt that it behooves us to know truth?²

"None whatever," replies Trygetius. And by their very countenances the others showed that they were in agreement with him.

But, I continue, if we can be happy without understanding truth, do you still think that an understanding of it is necessary?

At this point, Alypius says: "I think it more prudent for me to be a judge of this debate. Since a journey to the city has been planned for me, I ought to be relieved of the burden of taking sides. And furthermore, I shall be able to entrust to some one else the rôle of judge more readily than that of defender of either side. Henceforth, therefore, expect nothing from me on behalf of one side or the other."

1 On November 10, 386. See note 8, page 252.

2 To indicate something true, Augustine uses the term, *verum*. To denote truth in the abstract, he employs the term, *veritas*. "A true thing seems to me to be that which is." *Soliloq.* II, v, 8. "If anything is true, it is true by truth." *Ibid.* I, xv, 27.

In this translation, the word, *truth*, is used as the equivalent of *verum*. The term, *the truth*, is used in translating *veritas*.

For an exhaustive treatment of Augustine's notion of truth, cf. Boyer, *L'idée de vérité*, Paris, 1920.

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spectetis. Quod ei cum concessum esset ab omnibus, et ego rogationem repetissem: Beati certe, inquit Trygetius, esse volumus; et si ad hanc rem possumus absque veritate pervenire, quaerenda nobis veritas non est. Quid hoc ipsum, inquam? Existimatisne beatos nos esse posse, etiam non inventa veritate? Tunc Licentius: Possumus, inquit, si verum quaeramus. Hic cum ego caeterorum sententiam nutu flagitassem: Movet me, inquit Navigius, quod a Licentio dictum est. Potest enim fortasse hoc ipsum esse beate vivere, in veritatis inquisitione vivere. Defini ergo, ait Trygetius, quid sit beata vita, ut ex eo colligam quid respondere conveniat. Quid censes, inquam, esse aliud beate vivere, nisi secundum id, quod in homine optimum est, vivere? Temere, inquit, verba non fundam: nam id ipsum optimum quid sit, definiendum mihi abs te puto. Quis, inquam, dubitaverit, nihil aliud esse hominis optimum, quam eam partem animi, cui dominanti obtemperare convenit caetera quaeque in homine sunt? Haec autem, ne aliam postules definitionem, mens aut ratio dici potest.¹ Quod si tibi non videtur, quaere quomodo ipse definias

1 *Retract.* lib. I, cap. I, n. 2.

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When this had been unanimously granted him, and when I had repeated the question, Trygetius says:

"Of course, we wish to be happy:³ but if we can reach that objective without the truth, then we need not search for the truth."

I say: What is that? Do all of you believe that we can be happy without finding the truth?

Then Licentius says: "We can be happy if we are searching for truth."⁴

When, by a nod, I had sought the opinion of the others, Navigius says:

"I am impressed by what Licentius has said, because *to live happily* is perhaps the very same as *to live in search of the truth*."

"Then define what a happy life is," says Trygetius, "so that from your definition I may gather what answer is fitting."

I reply: What else do you think that a happy life is, except a life in conformity with that which is the best element in man?

"I shall not heedlessly spill words," says Trygetius. "I certainly think that you ought to define for me what this best element is."

I say: Who can doubt that the best element in man is nothing else than that part of the mind to which it behooves all the other parts in man to conform as to a master? And that part—lest you should request another definition—may be called the understanding or reason.⁵ But if this does not meet with your approval, then see how

3 Cf. Cicero, *Hortensius*, frag. 36 (Müller); *Tusculan. Quaest.*, lib. V. cap. X, n. 28.

4 "The mere investigation of things that are most hidden and most important has its delight. If we meet with anything resembling truth, the mind is filled with a pleasure that wholly befits a man." (Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xli, 127.)

5 *Retract.*, *ibid.* Cf. Cicero, *de fin.*, V, xiii. 36; xiv, 38.

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vel beatam vitam, vel hominis optimum. Assentior, inquit.

6. Quid ergo? ut ad propositum, inquam, redeamus; videturne tibi non invento vero beate posse vivi, si tantum quaeratur? Repeto, inquit, sententiam illam meam: Minime videtur. Vos, inquam, quid opinamini? Tum Licentius: Mihi prorsus, inquit, videtur: nam majores nostri, quos sapientes beatosque accepimus, eo solo quod verum quaerebant, bene beateque vixerunt. Ago gratias, inquam, quod cum Alympio me judicem fecistis, cui, fateor, invidere jam coeperam. Quoniam igitur alteri vestrum videtur beatam vitam sola investigatione veritatis; alteri, non nisi inventionem posse contingere; Navigius autem paulo ante ostendit in tuam, Licenti, partem se velle transire: magnopere exspecto quales sententiarum vestrarum patroni esse possitis. Res enim magna est, et diligenti discussione dignissima. Si res magna est, ait Licentius, magnos viros desiderat. Noli quaerere, inquam, praesertim in hac villa, quod ubivis gentium reperire difficile est: sed potius explica, cur id quod abs te non temere, ut opinor, prolatum est, et qua tibi ratione videatur: nam et maximae res, cum a parvis quaeruntur, magnos eos solent efficere.

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you would define either a happy life or the best element in man.

"I am in agreement," he replies.

6. I say: Now, to return to our subject, do you think that life can be happy if truth be merely sought, but not found?

"I repeat that opinion of mine," says Trygetius. "It does not seem so to me."⁶

What is your opinion? I say to the others. Then Licentius says:

"I think that it certainly can; for our ancestors, whom we credit with having been wise and happy, lived upright and happy lives by the mere fact that they were searching for truth."

I say: I am thankful for your having appointed me a judge together with Alypius; and I confess that I had begun to envy him. But at the present moment, since one of you thinks it possible to attain a happy life by a mere searching for the truth, whilst the other thinks it can be attained only by the finding of it—and a moment ago Navigius showed that he was inclined to go on your side, Licentius—I am very anxious to see what kind of defenders of your opinions you may be. The question in debate is a matter of the utmost importance: it is worthy of diligent discussion.

"If it is a matter of great moment," says Licentius, "it calls for men of great abilities."

I say: Do not try to find—especially at this villa—what can hardly be found anywhere on earth. Rather, explain the why and the wherefore of your believing what has been—and not unwisely, I believe—proffered by you. For, when matters of great moment are inquired into by men of little ability, they usually make them men of great ability.

⁶ There is no record of his having previously expressed this opinion. Undoubtedly, it had been expressed, but not recorded.

III

7. Quoniam te, inquit, video magnopere nos urgere, ut adversum invicem disputemus, quod te utiliter velle confido; quaero cur beatus esse non possit, qui verum quaerit, etiamsi minime inveniatur? Quia beatum, inquit Trygetius, volumus esse perfectum in omnibus sapientem. Qui autem adhuc quaerit, perfectus non est. Hunc igitur quomodo asseras beatum, omnino non video. Et ille: Potest apud te, inquit, vivere¹ auctoritas majorum? Non omnium, inquit Trygetius. Quorum tandem? Ille: Eorum scilicet, qui sapientes fuerunt. Tum Licentius: Carneades, inquit, tibi sapiens non videtur? Ego, ait, graecus non sum; nescio Carneades iste qui fuerit. Quid, inquit Licentius, de illo nostro Cicerone, quid tandem existimas? Hic cum diu tacuisset: Sapiens fuit, inquit. Et ille: Ergo ejus de hac re sententia habet apud te aliquid ponderis? Habet, inquit. Accipe igitur quae sit, nam eam tibi excidisse arbitror. Placuit enim Ciceroni nostro, beatum esse qui veritatem investigat, etiamsi ad ejus inventionem non valeat pervenire. Ubi hoc, inquit, Cicero dixit? Et Licentius: Quis ignorat eum affirmasse vehementer, nihil ab homine percipi

1 Sex mss. *vincere*. Sic etiam Er. et editio Veneta.

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CHAPTER III

7. He says: "Because I see that you are strongly urging us to debate with each other, and since I am confident that you wish it for our own good, I ask why a searcher for truth cannot be happy, even though he does not find it."

"Because," replies Trygetius, "we require that a happy man be perfect, a sage in all respects. But whoever is still searching, is not perfect. Therefore, I utterly fail to see how you can call him happy."

"Could the authority of our ancestors have any weight with you?" asks Licentius.

"Not that of every one of them," replies Trygetius.

"Of which of them, then?" asks Licentius.

"Of those only who were wise men," replies Trygetius.

"Do you not think that Carneades was a wise man?" asks Licentius.

"I am not a Greek," replies Trygetius. "I do not know who that Carneades was."¹

"Well, what about our own Cicero?" says Licentius. "At any rate, what do you think of him?"

After a long pause, Trygetius says: "He was a wise man."

"Therefore," says Licentius, "his opinion on this matter has some weight with you?"

"It has," replies Trygetius.

"Then hear what it is, for I think it has escaped you. Our Cicero was of the opinion that a man who is searching for the truth even though he be unable to attain to its discovery, is nevertheless happy."²

"Where has Cicero said that?" Trygetius asks.

Licentius rejoins: "Who does not know that he has forcefully asserted that nothing can be understood by man,

1 Cf. Note 1, page 241.

2 *Hortensius*, fragment 101, Müller.

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posse; nihilque remanere sapienti, nisi diligentissimam inquisitionem veritatis: propterea quia si incertis rebus esset assensus, etiam si fortasse verae forent, liberari ab errore non posset; quae maxima est culpa sapientis? Quamobrem si et sapientem necessario beatum esse credendum est, et veritatis sola inquisitio perfectum sapientiae munus est; quid dubitamus existimare beatam vitam, etiam per se ipsa investigatione veritatis posse contingere?

8. Tunc ille: Licetne tandem ad ea quae temere concessa sunt, redire rursum? Hic ego: Illi hoc non solent concedere, inquam, quos ad disputandum non inveniendi veri cupiditas, sed ingenii puerilis jactantia impellit. Itaque apud me, praesertim cum adhuc nutriendi educandique sitis, non solum conceditur, sed etiam in praeceptis habeatis volo, ad ea vos discutienda redire oportere, quae concesseritis incautius. Et Licentius: Non parvum in philosophia profectum puto, inquit, cum in comparatione recti verique inveniendi contemnitur a disputante victoria. Itaque libenter obsequor praeceptis et sententiae tuae, et Trygetium ad id quod se temere concessisse arbitratur, res enim mei juris est, redire permitto. Tum Alypius: Suscepti a me officii nondum partes esse, vosmetipsi mecum recognoscitis. Sed quoniam id jamdudum disposita profectio interrumpere me compellit, pro meo quoque munere geminatam sibi potestatem particeps mecum iudici non renuet usque

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that nothing remains for a wise man but a diligent search for the truth, and that if he should give assent to doubtful things—and in a wise man, this fault is the greatest of all—he could not be free from error, even if those things should happen to be true?³ Wherefore, if we must believe that a wise man is necessarily happy, and if a mere search for the truth is the whole function of wisdom, why should we hesitate to believe that a happy life can be attained by the mere search for the truth?”

8. Then Trygetius says: “Is it in any way permitted to revoke what has been thoughtlessly conceded?”

At this juncture I interpose: That concession is not usually granted by those whom boyish vainglory—and not the desire of finding the truth—incites to disputation. Therefore, not only is that permission granted, but—especially since you are to be reared and educated at my residence—I want you to regard it as one of your rules that it behooves you to return to the discussion of any points which you may have incautiously conceded.

Licentius says: “I consider it no small progress in philosophy, when victory is disregarded by a disputant for the sake of finding the right and the true. Therefore I gladly comply with your precept and conform to your sentiments: I allow Trygetius to return to what he thinks he has unwisely conceded, for the matter is within my competency.”

At this point, Alypius says: “You, as well as I, are aware that the function of the rôle undertaken by me has not yet been performed. But because my previously arranged departure compels me to interrupt it, my fellow-judge will not decline the twin power of my office until my return;

3 “And that nothing is more discreditable than for assent and approbation to precede knowledge and perception.” Cicero, *Academ.*, I, xii, 45. Cf. *ibid.*, II, xx, 66; xxi, 67.

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in reditum meum: video enim hoc vestrum certamen longius progressurum. Et cum discessisset: Quod,² inquit Licentius, temere concesseras, profer. Et ille: Temere dedi, inquit, Ciceronem fuisse sapientem. Ergone Cicero sapiens non fuit, a quo in latina lingua philosophia et inchoata est, et perfecta? Etsi concedam, inquit, esse sapientem, non omnia tamen ejus probo. Atqui oportet multa ejus alia refellas, ut non impudenter hoc de quo agitur, improbare videaris. Quid si hoc solum non recte sensisse illum affirmare paratus sum? Vestra, ut opinor, nihil interest, nisi cujus³ ponderis ad id quod volo asserendum, rationes afferam. Perge, inquit ille. Quid enim, inquit, audeam contra eum, qui se Ciceronis adversarium profiteatur?

9. Hic Trygetius: Volo attendas, ait, tu judex noster, quemadmodum superius beatam vitam definieris: dixisti namque eum beatum esse, qui secundum eam partem animi

2 Ita Par. Er. Ven. Lov. In P. B. *Et cum discessit: Quid.*

3 Ita mss. At in excusis legitur, *nisi alicujus ponderis.*

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for I see that this contest of yours is going to continue for a long time."

After the departure of Alypius, Licentius says: "Bring forward what you had heedlessly conceded."

Trygetius says: "I had heedlessly conceded that Cicero was a wise man."

"But then was Cicero not a wise man?—he by whom philosophy was begun and brought to completion in the Latin language!"⁴

"Even though I grant that Cicero was a wise man," says Trygetius, "I nevertheless do not agree with everything he wrote."

"But you must refute a great many other opinions of his, lest you seem brazenly to impugn the one that is being discussed."

Trygetius says: "But what if I am prepared to prove merely that he held an erroneous opinion on this point. In that case, as far as I can see, your only concern is with regard to the weight of the reasons which I offer for what I believe we ought to maintain."

"Go ahead," says Licentius. "Indeed what could I venture against one who avows himself an opponent of Cicero?"

9. Then Trygetius says: "I wish that you, our judge, would direct your attention to the way you defined a happy life a moment ago. For you said that the man is happy

⁴ Cicero elaborated no distinctive system or school of philosophy: he was an eclectic. But he endeavored to imbue the Romans with a love for philosophy; and he made the teachings of the several Greek schools available to the Romans in their own language. He appropriated common Latin words, and made them philosophic terms, ex. gr. *approbatio*, *perceptio*, *assensio*, etc. In other cases, he adopted the Greek terms, explained them and, as it were, Latinized them. (*Tusculan.* II, ii, 4; *Academ.* I, i, 3; I, vii, 25.)

In this sense only, could it be said that he began philosophy and brought it to completion in the Latin language.

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vivit, quam caeteris convenit imperare. Tu autem, Licenti, volo vel nunc mihi concedas (jam enim libertate, in quam maxime nos vindicaturam se philosophia pollicetur, jugum illud auctoritatis excussi), perfectum non esse qui adhuc veritatem requirat. Tum ille post diuturnum silentium: Non concedo, inquit. Et Trygetius: Cur, quaeso? explica. Isthic sum enim, et aveo audire, quo pacto possit et perfectus homo esse, et adhuc quaerere veritatem. Hic ille: Qui ad finem, inquit, non pervenit, fateor quod perfectus non sit. Veritatem autem illam solum Deum nosse arbitror, aut forte hominis animam, cum hoc corpus, hoc est tenebrosum carcerem, dereliquerit. Hominis autem finis est, perfecte quaerere veritatem: perfectum enim quaerimus, sed tamen hominem. Et Trygetius: Non igitur potest beatus esse homo. Quomodo enim; cum id quod magnopere concupiscit, assequi nequeat? Potest autem homo beate vivere, siquidem potest secundum eam partem animi vivere quam dominari in homine fas est. Potest⁴ igitur verum invenire. Aut colligat se, et non concupiscat verum, ne cum id assequi non potuerit, necessario miser sit. At hoc ipsum est beatum hominis, ait ille, perfecte quaerere veritatem: hoc est enim pervenire ad finem, ultra quem non potest progredi. Quisquis ergo minus instanter quam oportet veritatem quaerit, is ad finem hominis non pervenit: quisquis autem tantum quantum homo potest ac debet, dat operam inveniendae veritati, is etiamsi eam non inveniatur, beatus est; totum enim facit, quod ut faciat, ita natus est. Inventio autem si defuerit, id deerit quod natura non dedit.

4 Ed. Par. *Aut potest igitur verum invenire: aut colligat.*

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who lives in harmony with that part of the mind which fittingly governs the other parts. And, Licentius, I wish that you would now concede me that a man who is still searching for the truth, is not perfect; for, by virtue of the liberty into which philosophy promises most assuredly to lead us, I have thrown off the yoke of authority."

After a long pause, Licentius says: "I do not concede it."

Then Trygetius says: "Why? Give us an explanation; for I am most eager to hear how a man can be at the same time perfect and still searching for the truth?"

Licentius now says: "I admit that the man who has not reached his goal, is not perfect. But I think that God alone knows the truth—or perhaps the mind of man after it has departed from the body, its dark prison.⁵ However, man's goal is to search for the truth perfectly. We are indeed seeking a perfect man, but a *man* nevertheless."

"Consequently, man cannot be happy," says Trygetius. "For how can he be happy while he is unable to reach what he so ardently desires? But a man can live happily precisely because he can live in harmony with that part of the mind which ought to be the governing power in man. Therefore, he is capable of finding truth. Otherwise, let him restrain himself: let him not yearn for truth, lest he be inevitably miserable, since he would be unable to reach it."

"But," says Licentius, "man's happiness is precisely this: that he be making a thorough search for the truth. This is truly the attaining of the end beyond which he is unable to go. Therefore, whoever is seeking the truth less earnestly than it behooves him, does not attain his end. On the other hand, whoever strives to find the truth, insofar as a man can and ought to—such a man is happy even though he does not find it; for he is doing all that man was born to do. And if the finding is not accom-

⁵ See note on, "the divine mind indwelling in mortals," (ch. I, no. 1).

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Postremo cum hominem necesse sit aut beatum esse aut miserum, nonne dementis est eum qui dies noctesque quantum potest instat investigandae veritati, miserum dicere? Beatus igitur erit. Deinde illa definitio mihi, ut arbitror, uberius suffragatur: nam si beatus est, sicuti est, qui secundum eam partem animi vivit, quam regnare caeteris convenit, et haec pars ratio dicitur; quaero utrum non secundum rationem vivat, qui quaerit perfecte veritatem? Quod si absurdum est, quid dubitamus beatum hominem dicere sola ipsa inquisitione veritatis?

IV

10. Mihi, ait ille, nec secundum rationem vivere, nec beatus omnino, quisquis errat videtur. Errat autem omnis qui semper quaerit nec invenit. Unde tibi unum jam e duobus monstrandum est: aut errantem beatum esse posse; aut eum qui quod quaerit nunquam invenit, non errare. Hic ille: Beatus errare non potest. Et cum diu siluisset: Non autem errat, inquit, cum quaerit; quia ut non erret, perfecte quaerit. Et Trygetius: Ut non erret quidem, inquit, quaerit; sed errat, cum minime invenit. Ita autem tibi profuturum putasti, quod errare ille non vult, quasi nemo erret invitus, aut quisquam omnino erret, nisi invitus. Tum

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plished, the defect is merely something which nature did not bestow.⁶ Finally, would it not be utter folly to call a man miserable, who through days and nights is incessantly seeking the truth insofar as he is able? But since a man must be either happy or miserable, he will therefore be happy. And so, that definition is, I believe, far more favorable to me; for if a man is happy—as indeed he is—who is living in harmony with that part of the mind which rightly governs all his other parts, and if that part is called *reason*, then, I ask, is a man living in discordance with reason if he is making a thorough search for the truth? If this is absurd, then why do we hesitate to say that a man is happy by the mere search for the truth?"

6 "Is that our fault? Blame nature, because she has hidden truth." Cicero, *Academ.* II, x, 32.

CHAPTER IV

10. "Whoever is in error," says Trygetius, "seems to me to be neither happy nor living according to reason. And whoever is always seeking and never finding, is in error. Hence, you must prove at least one of these two statements, namely, either that a person in error can be happy, or that he who never finds what he is seeking, is not in error."

"A happy man cannot be in error," says Licentius. And then, after a long silence, he adds: "But he is not in error while he is making a search, because he is making a thorough search so as not to be in error."

And Trygetius says: "Certainly, he is searching in order not to be in error; but he is in error whenever he is not finding. You thought that his unwillingness to be in error would be an argument in your favor, just as if no one were

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ego, cum ille diu cunctaretur quid responderet: Definendum vobis est, inquam, quid sit error: facilius enim ejus fines potestis videre, in quem jam penitus ingressi estis. Ego, inquit Licentius, definire aliquid idoneus non sum: quamvis errorem definire sit facilius quam finire. Ego, ait ille, definiam; quod mihi facillimum est, non ingenio, sed causa optima. Nam errare est utique semper quaerere, nunquam invenire. Ego, inquit Licentius, si vel istam definitionem facile possem refellere, jamdudum causae meae non defuissem. Sed quoniam aut res ipsa per se ardua est, aut ita mihi apparet; peto a vobis ut usque in crastinam lucem quaestio differatur, si nihil hodie quod respondeam, reperire potuero, cum id sedulo mecum ipse volvam. Quod cum concedendum putarem, non renuentibus caeteris, deambulatum ire surreximus: nobisque inter nos multa variaeque sermocinantibus, ille in cogitatione defixus fuit. Quod cum frustra esse sensisset, relaxare animum maluit, et nostro se sermoni miscere. Postea cum jam advesperasceret, in eundem conflictum redierant: sed modum imposui, persuasique ut in alium diem differi paterentur. Inde ad balneas.

11. Postridie autem cum consedissemus: Proferte, inquam, quod heri coeperatis. Tum Licentius: Distuleramus, inquit, disputationem, nisi fallor, rogatu meo, cum erroris definitio difficillima mihi esset. Hic plane, inquam, non

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unwillingly in error, or as if anybody were in error except unwillingly."

At this point, because Licentius was hesitating a long time as to what answer he should give, I interpose: You ought to define what error is. You can very easily discern its boundaries, for you have already entered its area.

"I am not capable of defining anything," says Licentius, "although it may be easier to *define* error than to *confine* it."

"I shall define it," says Trygetius. "It is most easy for me—easy, not by reason of talent, but for the very best of reasons; for, *to be in error is to be forever seeking and never finding.*"

Licentius says: "If I could easily refute that definition, I should not have been so long a failure in defending my case. But because the matter is either really or seemingly difficult, I beg of you that, if I cannot find the answer today—although I am sedulously revolving it—the question be postponed till tomorrow."

Since I was of the opinion that this request ought to be granted, and since the others voiced no objection, we arose to go for a walk. And while we were conversing on many subjects, he remained apart, fixed in cogitation. When he saw that this availed him nothing, he decided to relax his mind and to join our conversation. Afterwards, when it was already twilight, they resumed the conflict; but I put an end to it, and persuaded them to allow it to be postponed to another day. Then to the bathing halls.

11. On the following day,¹ when we had been seated together, I say: Resume what you began yesterday.

Then Licentius says: "Unless I am mistaken, we postponed the discussion at my request because the definition of error was extremely difficult for me."

¹ November 11, 386. See note 8, page 252.

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erras, quod ut tibi omen sit at reliqua, libenter optaverim.¹ Audi ergo, inquit, quod heri etiam nisi intercessisses, protulissem. Error mihi videtur esse falsi pro vero approbatio; in quem nullo pacto incidit, qui veritatem quaerendam semper existimat: falsum enim probare non potest, qui probat nihil: non igitur potest errare. Beatus autem facillime esse potest: nam, ne longius abeam, si nobis ipsis, ut heri licuit, quotidie vivere liceret; nihil mihi occurrit cur nos beatos appellare dubitaremus. Viximus enim magna mentis tranquillitate, ab omni corporis labe animum vindicantes, et a cupiditatum facibus longissime remoti, dantes, quantum homini licet, operam rationi; hoc est, secundum illam divinam partem animi viventes, quam beatam vitam esse hesterna inter nos definitione convenit: atque, ut opinor, nihil invenimus, sed tantummodo quaesivimus veritatem. Potest igitur sola inquisitione veritatis, etiamsi eam invenire minime possit, homini beata vita contingere. Nam definitio tua vide quanta facilitate excludatur notione communi. Etenim errare dixisti esse, semper quaerere, et nunquam invenire. Quid si quisquam nihil quaerat, et interrogatus, verbi gratia, utrumnam modo dies sit, temere statimque noctem esse opinetur atque respondeat? nonne tibi videtur errare? Hoc igitur erroris genus vel immanissimum, non complexa est definitio tua. Quid si etiam non errantes complexa est, potestne definitio ulla esse vitiosior? Nam si quis Alexandriam quaerat, et ad eam recto pergat itinere; non, opinor, potes eum errantem vocare.

1 *Retract.*, lib. I, cap. I, n. 2.

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I say: On this point, you certainly are not in error. And I should like this to be for you an omen² with regard to all the other points.

"Then," says he, "hear what I should have proffered even yesterday if you had not intervened. It seems to me that error is the approval of the false for the true. And nobody falls into this if he thinks that our search for the truth must be endless. For whoever accepts nothing as true, cannot accept the false for the true; and therefore he cannot be in error. But he can most assuredly be happy; for—to be concise—if we could always live as it was granted us to live yesterday, I see no reason why we should hesitate to call ourselves happy. We lived in profound mental tranquillity, entirely free from the fever of inordinate desires, keeping the mind free from every bodily taint, and devoting ourselves to reason insofar as that is possible for a man. In a word, we were living in harmony with that part of the mind which is divine.³ And it was definitively agreed among us yesterday that this is the happy life. Yet, in my opinion, we discovered nothing new: we were merely searching for the truth. Therefore, even though man be absolutely unable to find the truth, his life can be happy by a mere search for it. Furthermore, see how readily your definition is refuted by common opinion. You have said that 'to be in error is to be forever seeking and never finding.' But if it should happen that some one is not searching for anything, and is asked, for instance, whether it is now daytime, and if he should at once casually believe and say that it is nighttime, would he not seem to you to be in error? And yet, your definition did not include this very extensive class of error. Moreover, if it actually included some who are not in error, could any definition be more faulty? Now, if it should happen that some one is seeking Alexandria and is traveling directly towards it, I believe

² *Retract., ibid.*

³ Cf. "the divine mind indwelling in mortals," ch. 1.

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Quid si eamdem viam, variis impeditus causis, longo agat tempore, et in ea morte praeveniatur; nonne et semper quaesivit, et nunquam invenit, nec erravit tamen? Non, inquit ille, semper quaesivit.

12. Recte dicis, ait Licentius, et bene admones. Inde enim prorsus nihil ad rem pertinet definitio tua: non enim ego beatum esse dixi, qui semper quaerat veritatem. Quod ne fieri quidem potest: primo, quia non semper homo est; deinde, quia non ex quo tempore incipit esse homo, eo jam potest, aetate impediante, verum quaerere. Aut si semper id putas dicendum, si nihil temporis quo jam quaerere potest, perire patitur; rursus tibi Alexandriam redeundum est. Fac enim quemquam, ex quo tempore iter agere vel aetate vel negotio sinitur, pergere occipere illam viam, atque ut supra dixi, cum deviet nusquam, antequam perveniat tamen vita excedere; multum profecto errabis, si tibi errasse iste videbitur, quamvis omni quo potuit tempore, nec quaerere desierit, nec invenire potuerit quo pergebat. Quamobrem si et mea descriptio vera est, et secundum eam non errat ille qui perfecte quaerit, quamvis non inveniat veritatem, beatusque est ob eam rem, quod secundum rationem vivit; tua vero definitio et frustrata est, et si non esset, nihil eam curare deberem, si ex eo solum quod ego definivi, satis causa firmata est: cur, quaeso, nondum est ista inter nos quaestio dissoluta?

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you could not say that he is in error. And if he should be impeded for one reason or another, and should spend a long time on the journey, and should even be overtaken by death during that journey's course, was he not forever seeking and never finding? Nevertheless, he was not in error."

"He was not forever seeking," says Trygetius.

12. "You give a correct answer and a good suggestion," says Licentius, "for now your definition is utterly beside the point. I did not say that a man who is forever seeking the truth, is happy. In fact, he could not be forever seeking the truth; for, in the first place, a man does not live forever; and again, since age impedes him, he cannot be searching for truth from the very moment that he becomes a man. And even if you think that he ought to be regarded as forever seeking, provided that he allow no time to be lost in which he is able to prosecute the search—even in that case, you must come back to Alexandria. Suppose that a man begins that journey at the very first moment in which, by reason of age or occupation, he is permitted to make a journey; and suppose that—as I have already said—although he never deviates, he nevertheless reaches the end of his life before he reaches his destination. Notwithstanding all this, you would be greatly in error if you thought him to be in error, even though he did not cease to seek whenever he could, and was still unable to find what he was seeking. Wherefore, if my definition is true—and according to that definition, whoever is making a thorough search, even though he be not finding the truth, is not in error; and he is happy precisely because he is living in conformity with reason—your definition is rendered worthless; and even if it were not, I may ignore it completely if my contention is sufficiently established by the definition I have given. Why therefore, I ask, is our dispute not already settled?"

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V

13. Hic Trygetius: Dasne, inquit, sapientiam rectam viam vitae esse? Do, inquit, sine dubio: sed tamen volo mihi sapientiam definias, ut sciam utrum quae mihi, eadem tibi esse videatur. Et ille: Parum tibi, ait, videtur definita hoc ipso quod nunc interrogatus es? Etiam quod volui concessisti. Si enim non fallor, non falso recta via vitae sapientia nominatur. Tum Licentius: Nihil mihi tam ridiculum, quam ista definitio videtur, inquit. Fortasse, ait ille: pedetentim tamen quaeso, ut ratio praeveniat risum tuum: nihil enim est foedius risu irrisione dignissimo. Quid enim, ait ille, nonne fateris vitae mortem esse contrariam? Fateor, ait. Mihi igitur, inquit ille, via vitae nulla magis videtur, quam ea qua quisque pergit, ne in mortem incidat. Assentiebatur Trygetius. Ergo si viator quispiam diverticulum vitans, quod a latronibus obsideri audierit, recta ire pergat, atque ita evadat interitum; nonne et viam vitae, et rectam secutus est; et eam sapientiam nominat nemo? Quomodo igitur omnis recta vitae via sapientia est? Concessi enim esse, sed non solam. Definitio autem nihil complecti debuit, quod esset alienum. Itaque rursus defini, si placet, quid tibi videtur esse sapientia.

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CHAPTER V

13. Trygetius rejoins: "Do you grant that wisdom is the right way of life?"

"Yes, certainly," replies Licentius. "But I wish you would define wisdom for me, so that I may know whether both of us have the same notion of it."

Trygetius answers: "Do you not think it already defined by the very question you have been asked? And you have agreed to my contention; for if I am not mistaken, wisdom is correctly called the right way of life."

"To me," says Licentius, "nothing seems more ridiculous than that definition."

"Perhaps," says Trygetius. "Nevertheless, proceed cautiously, I beg you, so that reason may precede your laughter; for nothing is more detestable than laughter which well deserves to be laughed at."

"At any rate," says Licentius, "do you not admit that death is the opposite of life?"

"I do," replies Trygetius.

"Therefore," says Licentius, "it seems to me that the way of life is nothing else than the way which every one takes in order to avoid death."

Trygetius agreed.

Licentius continues: "Therefore, if some traveler would shun a bypath because he heard it was frequented by robbers, and would continue along the right road and would thus escape death, would he not be following the way of life and the right way? Yet, no one calls it wisdom. How, then, can every right way of life be wisdom? Of course, I have agreed that it is wisdom, but not wisdom exclusively. A definition, however, ought to include nothing that is foreign. So, please define again what you think wisdom to be."

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14. Diu ille tacuit; deinde: En, inquit, iterum definitio, si hoc tu nunquam finire statuisti. Sapientia est via recta, quae ad veritatem ducat. Similiter et hoc, inquit ille, refellitur: nam dum apud Virgilium Æneae dictum est a matre:

*Perge modo, et qua te ducit via dirige gressum,*¹

sequens hanc viam ad id quod dictum erat, id est ad verum, pervenit. Contende, si placet, ubi pedem ille incedens posuit, sapientiam posse dici: Quanquam stulte prorsus istam descriptionem tuam effringere conor; nam causam meam nulla plus adjuvat. Etenim sapientiam non ipsam veritatem, sed viam quae ad eam ducat, esse dixisti. Quisquis ergo hac utitur via, sapientia profecto utitur; et qui sapientia utitur, sapiens sit necesse est: sapiens igitur erit ille, qui perfecte quaesierit veritatem, etiamsi ad eam nondum pervenerit. Nam via quae ducit ad veritatem, nulla, uti opinor, intelligitur melius quam diligens inquisitio veritatis. Hac igitur sola via utens, jam iste sapiens erit: at nemo sapiens miser; omnis autem homo aut miser, aut beatus: beatum igitur faciet non tantum inventio, sed ipsa per se investigatio veritatis.

15. Tum ille arridens: Merito mihi, inquit, ista contingunt, dum adversario in re non necessaria fidenter assentior: quasi vero ego sim magnus definitor, aut quidquam in disputando magis supervacaneum putem. Quis enim modus erit, si ego rursus velim definiri abs te aliquid,

¹ *Æneid.* I, 400.

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14. Trygetius was silent for some time. Then he says: "Yes, I shall *define* it again if you are determined never to *confine* it. Wisdom is the right way that leads to the truth."

"And this," says Licentius, "is likewise refuted. For, according to Virgil, while this was said to Aeneas by his mother:

*Just travel on: direct thy step
Along the path that leads thee,¹*

he, following that path, reached what had been mentioned—in other words, he reached truth. Maintain, if you will, that this can be called wisdom, wherever he placed his step while traveling. But I should be very foolish to try to batter down that definition of yours, because no definition could be more helpful to my case. You have said that wisdom is not the truth itself, but that it is the way which leads to the truth. Of a certainty, therefore, whoever is using this way, is using wisdom; and, incontestably, whoever is using wisdom, is wise. Therefore, whoever will have made a thorough search for the truth, even if he will not have reached it, will nevertheless be wise. For, in my opinion, no better way to the truth can be conceived than a diligent search for the truth. Consequently, any man who is using this way alone, will be already wise. Now, no wise man is miserable. But every man is either miserable or happy. Therefore, not only the finding of the truth, but even the mere search for it, will make a man happy."

15. Then, with a smile, Trygetius says: "Deservedly has this befallen me, since I airily agreed with my opponent on a point of no necessity— just as if I were a great definer or as if I should consider anything a mere trifle in a debate. But when would this end if I should insist that something be defined again and again by you, and if I should pretend

¹ *Aeneid*, I, 401.

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et rursus ejusdem definitionis verba, et consequentium item singillatim omnia, fingens quod nihil intelligam, definiri flagitem? Nam quid planissimum non meo jure definiri cogam, si jure a me sapientiae definitio postulatur? Cujus enim verbi in animis nostris apertiore notione natura esse voluit quam sapientiae? Sed nescio quomodo, cum mentis nostrae veluti portum notio ipsa reliquerit, et verborum sibi quasi vela tetenderit, occurrant² statim calumniarum mille naufragia. Quamobrem aut definitio sapientiae ne requiratur, aut judex noster in ejus patrocinium dignetur descendere. Tum ego, cum jam stilum nox impediret, et quasi de integro magnum quiddam disserendum viderem oboriri, in alium diem distuli: nam disputare coeperamus sole jam in occasum declinante, diesque pene totus cum in rebus rusticis ordinandis, tum in recensione primi libri Virgilii peractus fuit.

2 Sic Par. Er. Ven. Lov.—In P. B. *occurrent*.

VI

16. Deinde mox ut illuxit, ita enim res erant pridie constitutae ut largum esset otium, statim peragendum negotium susceptum est. Tum ego: Heri postulasti, inquam, Trygeti, ut a judicis munere ad sapientiae patrocinium descenderem: quasi vero quemquam in sermone vestro adversarium sapientia pateretur; aut ullo defendente ita laboraret, ut majus implorare deberet auxilium. Nam

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to miss your meaning, and should demand that the terms of that definition and all its logical consequences be defined one by one? And yet, if a definition of wisdom is rightly demanded of me, then why may I not rightly demand the definition of something already most clear? Indeed, of what word has nature intended a clearer notion in our minds than of the word, wisdom. But when that notion floats away, as it were, from the harbor of our mind, and spreads, so to speak, the sails of words,² I know not how the submerged hulks of a thousand fallacies dash against it. Wherefore, either let no definition of wisdom be demanded, or let our judge deign to step down to her defense."

At this point I postponed the debate to another day, because darkness was making it difficult to use the stylus and because I saw that an entirely new and important subject of discussion was arising. Indeed it had been well towards sunset when we began our discussion, because almost the whole day had been spent in attending to chores at the villa and in reviewing the first book of Virgil.

2 " . . . unfold the sails of eloquence." Cicero, *Tusc.*, IV, v, 10.

CHAPTER VI

16. Then as soon as it was daylight,¹ the pending question was at once brought forward; for on the preceding day matters had been so arranged that there would be ample leisure. Then I say:

Yesterday, Trygetius, you asked me to step down from my office of judge and to come to the defense of wisdom—as if wisdom would suffer anybody to be her opponent in your debate; or as if, although some one was already defending her, she were finding herself in such straits that

1 November 12, 386. See note 8, page 252.

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neque inter vos aliud quaerendum natum est, quam quid sit sapientia; in quo eam vestrum neuter oppugnat, quia uterque desiderat. Neque si tu in definienda sapientia defecisse te putas, propterea reliqua defensio sententiae tuae tibi deserenda est. Itaque a me nihil aliud habebis quam definitionem sapientiae, quae nec mea nec nova est, sed et priscorum hominum, et quam vos mirer non recordari. Non enim nunc primum auditis, Sapientiam esse rerum humanarum divinarumque scientiam.

17. Hic Licentius, quem post istam definitionem diu putabam quaesitum esse quod diceret, subiecit statim: Cur ergo non, quaeso, sapientem vocamus flagitiosissimum illum hominem, quem ipsi bene novimus per innumera scorta solere dissolvi; Albicerium dico illum, qui apud Carthaginem multos annos consulentibus mira quaedam et certa respondit? Innumerabilia commemorare possem, nisi et apud eos loquerer qui experti sunt, et paucis nunc satis sit ad id quod volo. Nonne cochlearium (mihi autem dicebat) cum domi non inveniretur; tuo jussu percontatus, non solum quid quaereretur, verum etiam nominatim cujus res esset, et ubi lateret, citissime verissimeque respondit? Item me praesente, omitto illud quod in eo quod rogabatur nihil omnino falsus est, sed cum puer qui nummos ferebat, certam eorum partem, cum ad eum pergeremus, furatus esset; omnes sibi numerari jussit, coegitque illum

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she had to implore additional help. But in your dispute, the only problem that has arisen is this: *What is wisdom?* And in this, neither of you is assailing wisdom, because each of you is desirous of her. But even if you believe that you have not succeeded in defining wisdom, you must not on that account abandon the defense of the rest of your position. For that reason, you will receive from me nothing more than a definition of wisdom—a definition which is not mine and which is not new. It has been given by ancient philosophers; and I am surprised that you do not recall it. Not for the first time are you hearing that *wisdom is a knowledge of divine and of human things*.²

17. I had expected that after this definition Licentius would ask what he ought to say. But straightway he countered:

“Then, I want to know why we do not name as wise that utterly iniquitous man whom we all well know to be habitually debauched with countless harlots. I mean that Albicerius, who for many years at Carthage has been giving clear and wonderful responses to those who consult him. I could give innumerable instances, were I not speaking to those who themselves have witnessed this. So, let a few instances suffice for my present purpose: When a spoon was missing at our home, and at your bidding—he was addressing his remarks to me³—Albicerius was consulted about it, did he not promptly and accurately tell not only what was being sought but also whose it was and where it was to be found? And likewise in my presence—to say nothing about the fact that he made absolutely no mistake with regard to the matter on which he was being consulted—when the boy who was carrying the money, stole a certain portion of it while we were on our way to Albi-

2 Cicero, *De officiis*, II, ii, 5; *Tuscul. Quaest.*, IV, xxvi, 57.

3 For Augustine's attitude towards astrologers and soothsayers, cf. *Confessions*, Bk. IV, ch. II - III.

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ante oculos nostros quos abstulerat reddere, priusquam omnino ipse aut eosdem nummos vidisset, aut quantum sibi allatum fuerit audisset e nobis.

18. Quid quod doctissimum et clarissimum virum Flaccianum mirari solitum esse abs te accepimus? qui cum de fundo emendo esset locutus, ad illum divinum rem ita detulit, ut quid egisset, si potis esset, ediceret. Atque ille statim non modo negotii genus, sed etiam, in quo ille vehementer clamabat admirans, ipsum fundi nomen pronuntiavit, cum ita esset absurdum, ut vix ejus Flaccianus ipse meminisset. Jam illud sine stupore animi non queo dicere, quod amico nostro discipulo tuo sese volenti exagitare, flagitantique insolenter, ut diceret quid secum ipse tacitus voveret; Virgilii versum eum cogitare respondit. Cum ille obstupefactus negare non posset, perrexit quaerere quisnam versus esset. Nec Albicerius, qui grammatici scholam vix transiens vidisset aliquando, versum ipsum securus et garulus canere dubitavit. Num igitur aut res humanae non erant, de quibus ille consulebatur; aut sine rerum divinarum scientia, tam certa consulentibus et vera respondit? At utrumque absurdum est. Nam et humanae res nihil sunt aliud quam res hominum; ut argentum, nummi, fundus, postremo ipsa etiam cogitatio: et res divinas quis non recte arbitretur esse, per quas homini divinatio ipsa contingit? Sapiens ergo fuit Albicerius, si sapientiam rerum humanarum divinarumque scientiam illa definitione concedimus.

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cerius, the latter, even before he saw the coins or heard from us how much was being brought to him, compelled the boy to count all of it in his presence and before our own eyes, and made him restore what he had taken.

18. "What of the fact that we have heard from you that Flaccianus, a very learned and illustrious man, used to be astonished because, when he had spoken about buying a farm, he referred the matter to that soothsayer to see if the latter could tell him what he had done; and Albicerius at once stated not only the nature of the transaction but also—and Flaccianus really cried out in astonishment at this—the very name of the farm, although it was such a queer name that Flaccianus himself scarcely remembered it? But I can never repress my astonishment when I relate the fact that, when our friend, your pupil, in order to disconcert Albicerius, arrogantly demanded that he tell what he was silently revolving in his mind; and Albicerius replied that the questioner was thinking of one of Virgil's verses. And when the astonished questioner could not deny it, and proceeded to ask what verse it was, then Albicerius, who scarcely ever had had even a passing glance at any grammarian's school, recited aloud the line of poetry without the slightest hesitation, but with the utmost assurance. Now, would you say that those matters on which he was consulted were not human things? Or did he, without any knowledge of divine things, give such correct and unambiguous answers to those who consulted him? Each of these suppositions is absurd; for human things are nothing else than affairs of men, such as the silver and the coins and the farm and even the very act of thinking. And who would not regard as divine those things through which divination accrues to a man? Therefore, Albicerius was a wise man, if by that definition we concede that wisdom is a knowledge of divine and of human things."

VII

19. Hic ille: Primo, inquit,¹ ego scientiam non appello, in qua ille qui eam profitetur, aliquando fallitur. Scientia enim non solum comprehensis, sed ita comprehensis rebus constat, ut neque in ea quis unquam errare, nec quibus libet adversantibus impulsus nutare debeat. Unde verissime a quibusdam philosophis dicitur, in nullo eam posse nisi in sapiente inveniri; qui non modo perceptum habere debet id quod tuetur ac sequitur, verum etiam inconcussum tenere. Scimus autem illum quem commemorasti, multā saepe falsa dixisse: quod non solum aliis mihi referentibus comperi, sed praesens aliquando ipse percepi. Eumne igitur scientem vocem, cum saepe falsa dixerit; quem non vocarem, si cunctanter² vera dixisset? Hoc me de aruspici-bus et de auguribus et de his omnibus qui sidera consu-lunt, et de conjectoribus somniorum dixisse putatote. Aut aliquem ex hoc genere hominum proferte, si potestis, qui consultus, nunquam de responsis suis dubitaverit, nun-quam postremo falsa responderit. Nam de vatibus nihil mihi puto esse laborandum, qui mente loquuntur aliena.

20. Deinde res humanas esse ut concedam res homi-num, quidquam tu existimas nostrum esse, quod nobis vel dare vel eripere casus potest? Aut cum rerum humanarum scientia dicitur, ea dicitur, qua quisquam novit vel quot, vel quales fundos habeamus; quid auri, quid argenti, quidque denique alienorum carminum cogitemus? Illa est humana-

1 Victorini cdd. habent cum aliis tribus mss. *Hic ego: Primo, inquam, scientiam*. At mendose; uti satis intelligitur ex postremo capite, ubi haec responsio non obscure Trygetio attribuitur.

2 In prius excusis, *constanter*. In quinque mss. *incunctanter*. In aliis sex optimae notae legitur *cunctanter*.

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CHAPTER VII

19. Trygetius now says: "In the first place, under the term, knowledge [*scientia*], I do not include that in which its possessor may be wrong at times. Indeed [this kind of] knowledge does not consist of things merely comprehended: it consists of things comprehended in such manner that one is never wrong in his knowledge of them; and he should never waver, no matter by what adversaries he may be assailed. By some philosophers, therefore, it has been rightly said that this kind of knowledge can be found only in a wise man; and that he must have not only grasped what he maintains and follows, but must also hold it as unquestionable.¹ But as for the man you have mentioned, we know that he has often spoken many falsehoods. I know it, not merely because others have told me, but because I myself have witnessed it at times. Now, despite the fact that he has spoken many falsehoods, should I nevertheless call him a wise man, although I would not call him wise if he had spoken truths in a faltering manner? And you are to understand that in all this I am speaking of haruspices, augurs, all kinds of astrologers, and oneirocritics. But bring forward, if you can, some man of this sort who has never hesitated about his answers when he was consulted, or even one who has never given answers that were false. But I believe I do not have to trouble myself about oracles: they reveal the thoughts of some one else.

20. "Moreover although I concede that human things are affairs of men, yet what possessions do you think we have which chance could not give to us or take away? And when we speak of knowledge of human things, do we mean the knowledge by which some one knows the number or the kind of farms we have, how much gold or silver we have, or even what part of some one's poems we are thinking of?

¹ Cf. Cicero, *Academ.* II, ix, 27.

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rum rerum scientia, quae novit lumen prudentiae, temperantiae decus, fortitudinis robur, iustitiae sanctitatem. Haec enim sunt, quae nullam fortunam metuentes vere nostra dicere audemus: quae si Albicerius ille didicisset, nunquam, mihi crede, tam luxuriose deformiterque vixisset. Quod autem dixit, quem versum voveret animo ille a quo consulebatur; neque hoc puto inter res nostras esse numerandum: non quo negem honestissimas disciplinas ad possessionem quamdam nostri animi pertinere, sed quia versum alienum etiam imperitissimis canere ac pronuntiare concessum est. Ideoque talia cum in memoriam nostram incurrerint, non mirum est, si sentiri possunt ab hujus aeris animalibus quibusdam vilissimis, quos daemones vocant, a quibus nos superari acumine ac subtilitate sensuum posse concedo, ratione autem nego; atque id fieri nescio quo modo secretissimo atque a nostris sensibus remotissimo. Non enim, si miramur apiculam melle posito, nescio qua sagacitate qua hominem vincit, unde unde advolare; ideo eam nobis praepondere, aut saltem comparare debemus.

21. Itaque vellem magis iste Albicerius, ab eo qui discere cuperet, interrogatus ipsa metra docuisset; vel coactus a quopiam consultorum, de re sibi statim proposita versus proprios cecinisset. Quod eundem Flaccianum saepe dixisse soles commemorare, cum illud divinationis genus magna mentis altitudine derideret atque despiceret, idque

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Knowledge of human things is the knowledge which knows the light of prudence, the glory of temperance, the strength of fortitude, and the sacredness of justice;² for these are possessions which we, without fearing any vicissitudes of fortune, may rightly dare to call our own. And, believe me, if that Albicerius had known them, he would never have lived such a dissolute and shameless life. And as to his having told what line of poetry that client of his was thinking of, I do not think that this ought to be numbered among our possessions—not that I would deny that the very honorable arts are a portion of our mental possessions, but because it has been given even to the most unlearned to recite and declaim another's line of poetry. So, when such things rush into our memory, it is no wonder if they are sensed by some most worthless animals of the air, which are called demons. It is no wonder that this is accomplished in some way or other which is far remote from our senses; for I admit that we can be surpassed by them in cunning and in keenness of the senses. However, I deny that they are superior to us in reason. For even if we are astonished because the tiny bee—through some kind of keenness of sense, in which it surpasses man—flies from any direction whatever to where it has deposited honey, we must not on that account estimate it as superior or even equal to ourselves.

21. "And so, I should rather wish that this Albicerius had taught versification itself whenever he was asked by one who desired to learn; or that, urged by some client, he had composed verses of his own on a subject suddenly proposed to him. And you are wont to mention that Flaccianus himself often said this, inasmuch as he—with great depth

2 In Cicero's definition of wisdom (cf. ch. VI, no. 16), the term, *divine things* signifies nature, physics; the term, *human things*, comprises morals. Trygetius is insisting on this denotation of the terms, while Licentius is trying to extend it.

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nescio cui abjectissimae animulae, sic enim dicebat, tribueret, quo ille quasi spiritu admonitus vel inflatus haec respondere solitus esset. Quaerebat enim vir ille doctissimus ab iis qui talia mirarentur, num grammaticam vel musicam vel geometriam³ Albicerius posset docere? Quis autem illum nosset, et non istorum omnium imperitissimum fate-retur? Quamobrem ad extremum hortabatur, ut animos suos ii qui talia didicissent, illi divinationi sine dubitatione praeferrent, darentque operam his disciplinis instruere at-que adminiculari suam mentem, quibus aeriam istam in-visibility animantium naturam transilire, et eam super-volare contingeret.

3 Ita Par. Er. Ven. Lov. — In P. B. *geometricam*.

VIII

22. Jam res divinae cum, omnibus concedentibus, meliores augustioresque multo quam humanae sint; quo pacto ille eas assequi poterat, qui quid esset ipse, nesciebat? Nisi forte existimas sidera, quae quotidie contemplamur, magnum quiddam esse in comparatione verissimi et secre-tissimi Dei, quem raro fortasse intellectus, sensus autem nullus attingit: haec autem praesto sunt oculis nostris. Nec ista igitur sunt illa divina, qualia se sola scire sapientia profitetur: caetera autem quibus isti, nescio qui divinantes, vel ad vanam jactantiam, vel ad quaestum abutuntur, prae sideribus profecto viliora sunt. Non igitur Albicerius rerum humanarum ac divinarum scientiae particeps fuit, frustra-que abs te isto modo definitio nostra tentata est. Postremo

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of understanding—used to deride and despise this sort of divination. And to some kind of puny soul—that is what he used to call it—he used to attribute the fact that Albicerius was accustomed to give those answers, after he was informed and inspired by a quasi spirit. And of those who were in astonishment at such answers, that very learned man used to inquire whether Albicerius could teach grammar or music or geometry—and who that knew Albicerius, would not confess that he was totally ignorant of all those arts? Therefore, Flaccianus would most earnestly exhort those who had learned those branches, to the end that they would unhesitatingly value their minds more highly than divination. He would urge them to endeavor to build up and strengthen their minds by means of those branches of learning whose virtue it is to soar above that airy nature of invisible animals.

CHAPTER VIII

22. “But since divine things are universally conceded to be higher and nobler than human things, how was he able to reach those things, since he knew not what he himself was? Or perhaps you think that the stars, which we contemplate every day, are something great in comparison with the most true and only God. Of God, perhaps the intellect gets an occasional glimpse; but the senses never behold Him. On the other hand, the stars are before our very eyes; and therefore they are not the divine things of which alone wisdom professes to have knowledge. And the other things which those nondescript diviners abuse for the sake of ostentation or emolument—those are of baser nature than the stars. Therefore, Albicerius possessed no knowledge of divine and of human things; and, consequently, to no avail has our definition been assailed by you in this fashion. And finally—since we ought to regard

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cum quidquid praeter res humanas atque divinas est, nos vilissimum ducere et omnino contemnere oporteat; quaero in quibus rebus quaerat ille tuus sapiens veritatem? In divinis, ait ille: nam virtus etiam in homine sine dubitatione divina est. Has igitur Albicerius jam sciebat, quas tuus sapiens semper inquireret? Tum Licentius: Divinas, ait, et ille noverat, sed non eas quae a sapiente quaerendae sunt. Quis enim non evertat omnem loquendi consuetudinem, si ei divinationem concedat, adimat¹ res divinas, e quibus divinatio nominata est? Quare illa vestra definitio, ni fallor, nescio quid aliud quod a sapientiam non pertineret, inclusit.

23. Tum Trygetius: Definitionem istam, inquit, defendet, si libebit, ille qui protulit. Nunc mihi tu volo respondeas, ut tandem ad id quod agitur, veniamus. Isthic sum, inquit ille: Dasne, ait, Albicerium scisse verum? Do, inquit. Melior igitur tuo sapiente. Nullo modo, ait ille: nam quod genus veri sapiens inquit, non solum ille delirus hariolus, sed ne ipse quidem sapiens dum in hoc corpore vivit, assequitur: quod tamen tantum est, ut multo sit praestabilius hoc semper quaerere, quam illud aliquando invenire. Necesse est, ait Trygetius, ut mihi in angustiis definitio illa subveniat. Quae si propterea tibi vitiosa visa est, quia complexa est eum quem non possumus vocare sapientem; quaero utrum eam probes, si sapientiam rerum

1 Par. Er. Ven. Lov. *et adimat*.

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as wholly worthless and negligible whatever is outside the realm of divine and of human things—in what things, I ask you, could that wise man of yours seek the truth?”

“He could seek it in divine things,” replies Licentius, “for even in man there undoubtedly is a divine power.”¹

“Then, did Albicerius already know that which your wise man will be forever seeking?” asks Trygetius.

“He had a knowledge of divine things,” says Licentius, “but not a knowledge of the things that must be sought by a wise man. Indeed, who would not subvert our entire mode of speaking if he would concede him divination, but deny him a knowledge of divine things, from which the word, divination, is derived? Hence, unless I am mistaken, that definition of yours includes something or other which does not pertain to wisdom.”

23. Trygetius says: “The man who advanced that definition, will defend it if he so desires. But just now I want you to answer me, so that at length we may come to the question under discussion.”

“Here I am,” says Licentius.

“Do you admit that Albicerius had a knowledge of truth?” asks Trygetius.

“I do,” replies Licentius.

“Then, he is better than that wise man of yours,” says Trygetius.

“By no means,” says Licentius, “because neither that silly sooth-sayer, nor even the wise man himself while he is living in this body, reaches the kind of truth which the wise man is seeking. And so true is this, that it is really nobler to be forever seeking the latter kind of knowledge than to-be sometimes finding the former.”

“In my straits,” says Trygetius, “that definition must come to my aid. And if to you it seemed faulty because it included a man whom we cannot call wise, I ask whether you would approve it if we should call wisdom the knowl-

1 Cf. Cicero, *De fin.*, II, xxxiv, 114.

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humanarum divinarumque scientiam dicamus, sed earum quae ad beatam vitam pertineant. Est, inquit ille, et ista sapientia, sed non sola: unde superior definitio invasit alienum, haec autem proprium deseruit: quare illa avaritiae, ista stultitiae coargui potest. Etenim ut ipse jam explicem definitione quod sentio, sapientia mihi videtur esse rerum humanarum divinarumque, quae ad beatam vitam pertineant, non scientia solum, sed etiam diligens inquisitio. Quam descriptionem si partiri velis, prima pars quae scientiam tenet, Dei est; haec autem quae inquisitione contenta est, hominis. Illa igitur Deus, hac autem homo beatus est. Tum ille: Miror, inquit, sapientem tuum quomodo asseras² frustra operam consumere. Quomodo, inquit Licentius, frustra operam consumere,³ cum tanta mercede conquirat? Nam hoc ipso quo quaerit, sapiens est; et quo sapiens, eo beatus: cum ab omnibus involucris corporis mentem quantum potest, evolvit, et seipsum in semetipsum colligit; cum se non permittit cupiditatibus laniandum, sed in se atque in Deum semper tranquillus intenditur: ut et hic, quod beatum esse supra inter nos convenit, ratione perfruatur; et extremo die vitae ad id quod concupivit adipiscendum reperiatur paratus; fruaturque merito divina beatitudine, qui humana sit ante perfructus.⁴

2 Par. Er. Ven. *asseris*.

3 Editi omittunt hic loci, *operam consumere*: et mox habent, *cum tantam mercedem conquirat*; excepto Bad. qui cum mss. praefert, *tanta mercede*. Sic quoque editio Parisiensis.

4 Ita in mss. pro quo in edd. *perfruitus*.

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edge of those divine and human things which pertain to a happy life."

"Yes, that is wisdom," says Licentius, "but wisdom is not merely that. Consequently, the former definition trespasses on another's domain; this definition surrenders some of its own. Therefore, the former can be accused of avarice; this, of folly. But to express my own idea by way of definition, it seems to me that wisdom is not merely the knowledge but also the quest of those divine and human things which pertain to a happy life. And in case you wish to analyze this definition, its first part—which mentions knowledge—refers to God; but the second part—consisting of quest—pertains to man. Therefore, God is happy by the first part; man, by the second."

"I wonder how you could say that your wise man is laboring in vain," says Trygetius.

"How could I say that he is laboring in vain," says Licentius, "while he is making such a profitable search? For by the very fact that he is making a search, he is wise; and by being wise, he is happy. He is happy because, to the utmost of his power, he is extricating himself from the entanglements of the body, and devoting himself to sheer introspection; because he is not allowing himself to be torn asunder by inordinate desires, but is always tranquilly directing his mind towards itself and towards God;² and because he is doing all this in order to make a thoroughly good use of reason at the present time—and it has been agreed among us that a happy life is precisely this—and so that on the last day of his life he may be found prepared for what he has been longing to obtain, and so that he may rightly enjoy divine happiness after he has made a thoroughly good use of the happiness that is human."

2 Cf. *Soliloquies*, II, i, 1. "O God, who art forever the same, let me know myself, let me know Thee."

IX

24. Tum ego, cum Trygetius quid sibi esset respondendum diu quaereret: Non puto, inquam, Licenti, etiam argumenta huic defutura, si eum otiose quaerere permitamus: quid enim ei quovis loco defuit ad respondendum? Nam primo ipse intulit, quoniam de beata vita quaestio nata est, et beatum solum necesse est esse sapientem, siquidem stultitia etiam stultorum iudicio misera est; perfectum sapientem esse debere, non autem perfectum esse, qui adhuc verum quid sit inquit; unde ne beatum quidem. Cui loco tu cum molem auctoritatis objiceres, moleste¹ aliquantum Ciceronis nomine perturbatus, tamen se statim erexit, et generosa quadam contumacia in verticem libertatis exsiliit, rursumque arripuit quod erat de manibus violenter excussum: quaesivitque abs te, utrum tibi perfectus, qui adhuc quaereret, videretur; ut si fatereris non esse perfectum, ad caput recurreret, demonstraretque, si posset, per illam definitionem, perfectum esse hominem, qui secundum legem mentis vitam gubernaret: ac per hoc, beatum nisi perfectum esse non posse. A quo te laqueo cum expedisses cautius quam putabam, et perfectum hominem diceres, inquisitorem diligentissimum veritatis; ipsaque illa definitione, qua beatam vitam illam demum esse dixeramus, quae secundum rationem ageretur, tu praefidentius apertiusque pugnasses; ille tibi plane reposuit: nam occupavit praesidium tuum, unde pulsus omnino summam rerum amiseras, ni te induciae reparassent. Ubi enim arcem locaverunt Academici, quorum tueris senten-

¹ Editi, *modeste*. At mss. decem habent *moleste*, et melius; aludit nempe Augustinus ad illud, *molem auctoritatis*.

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CHAPTER IX

24. Now, because Trygetius was a long time trying to find an answer, I interpose:

I think, Licentius, that this boy would not lack arguments if we should permit him to make a leisurely search. Was he ever at a loss for an answer? At first—because there arose a question about the happy life—he inferred that only a wise man can be happy, since even fools agree that folly is miserable; that a wise man must needs be perfect; that he is not perfect, who is still trying to find out what truth is; and, consequently, that he is not happy. When you hurled the massive weight of authority against this stronghold, he was indeed for a moment unhappily disconcerted by the name of Cicero. But he straightway regained his courage, and with a certain mettlesome steadfastness he leaped into the whirlpool of liberty and recovered what had been violently struck from his hands. Then he asked you if you thought that any one who is still seeking something, is perfect. His purpose was to return to the original point if you would acknowledge that such a man is not perfect, and to show—if he could do it through that definition—that a man who regulates his life by the law of the mind, is a perfect man; and that, consequently, only a perfect man can be happy. Although you had—with more circumspection than I was expecting—avoided that trap, and were saying that a most diligent searcher for the truth is a perfect man, yet because you had combated too unguardedly and with too much reliance on the definition in which we had said that a happy life is one that is governed according to reason, he got round you completely, and he captured your fortress. You were completely repulsed; and you would have lost the mastery if the truce did not restore your strength. Now, where else than in the definition of error have the Academics, whose position you

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tiam, nisi in erroris definitione? Quae tibi nisi noctu fortasse per somnium rediret in mentem, jam quid responderes non habebas, cum in exponenda Ciceronis sententia idipsum tu ipse ante commemoraveris. Deinde ventum est ad definitionem sapientiae, quam cum tanta calliditate labefactare conareris, ut tua furta nec ipse auxiliator tuus Albicerius fortasse comprehenderet; quanta tibi vigilantia, quantis viribus restitit? quam te pene involvit atque depressit; nisi postremo te tua definitione nova tutareris, diceresque humanam esse sapientiam inquisitionem veritatis, ex qua propter animi tranquillitatem beata vita contingeret? Huic iste sententiae non² respondebit, praesertim si in proroganda diei vel parte quae restat, reddi sibi gratiam postulabit.

25. Sed ne longum faciamus, jam, si placet, sermo iste claudatur, in quo immorari etiam superfluum puto. Tractata enim res est pro suscepto negotio satis; quae post pauca omnino posset verba finiri, nisi exercere vos vellem, nervosque vestros et studia, quae mihi magna est cura, explorare: nam cum instituisssem vos ad quaerendam veritatem magnopere hortari, coeperam ex vobis quaerere quantum in ea momenti poneretis: omnes autem posuistis tantum, ut plus non desiderem. Nam cum beati esse cupiamus, sive id fieri non potest nisi inventa, sive non nisi diligenter quaesita veritate; postpositis caeteris omnibus rebus, nobis, si beati esse volumus, perquirenda est. Quamobrem jam istam ut dixi, disputationem terminemus, et relatum in litteras mittamus, Licenti, potissimum patri tuo, cujus erga philosophiam jam prorsus animum teneo. Sed adhuc quae admittat, quaero fortunam. Incendi

2 Ed. Par. omittit hanc particulam.

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are defending, located their citadel? And although you yourself had mentioned this very thing in expounding Cicero's opinion, yet you would have had no answer to give if it had not returned to your mind during the night—perhaps through a dream. Then we agreed on a definition of wisdom, although you were trying to weaken it with such cleverness that not even your helper, Albicerius, could fully see through your stratagems. With what alertness and vigor he resisted you! How very close he came to entangling and upsetting you! But you finally protected yourself by your new definition: you said that a search for the truth is human wisdom, and that a happy life results from this search by reason of mental tranquillity. Trygetius will make no reply to this claim, especially if he is going to ask that a favor be granted him in adjourning even for the remaining part of the day.

25. But lest we prolong the matter unduly, please let this discussion be brought to an end at once; for I deem it excessive to linger on it any longer. And indeed as regards the task that was undertaken, the matter has been sufficiently discussed. It could be entirely finished in a very few words, were it not that I wish to explore your assiduity and perseverance, for which I am deeply solicitous. As soon as I decided to exhort you most earnestly towards a search for the truth, I began to elicit from you how much importance you would attach to it; and all of you have attached to it as much importance as I would desire. But since we are longing for happiness—whether it demands the actual finding of the truth, or only a diligent search for it—we must, at any rate, subordinate everything else and make a thorough search for truth if we wish to be happy. Therefore, as I have said, let us put an end to this disputation. And, Licentius, let us send a written record of it especially to your father; for I have long been steering his mind towards philosophy, but I am still seeking the stroke of fortune that would give him admittance. Perhaps he will

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autem in haec studia vehementius poterit, cum teipsum jam intentum mecum sic vivere, non audiendo solum, verum etiam legendo ista cognoverit. Tibi autem si, ut sentio, Academici placent, vires ad eos defendendos validiores para; nam illos ego reos citare decrevi.³ Quae cum essent dicta, prandium paratum esse annuntiatum est, atque surreximus.

3 Antiquae editiones, *ego accusare decrevi*. Sic etiam aliquot mss. vetustiores, qui paulo post non habent haec verba, *prandium paratum esse annuntiatum est, atque*.

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be enkindled to glowing desire for those studies when he learns—not only by hearing it, but also by reading those notes—that you are now living this kind of life with me, and that you are zealously devoted to those studies. But if you agree with the Academics—and I feel that you do—then provide yourself with better equipment; for I am resolved to arraign them myself.¹

When this had been said, announcement was made that the midday meal was ready; and we ended the session.

1 Cf. Bk. III, ch. VII *sqq.*

BOOK II

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LIBER SECUNDUS

CAPUT I

1. Si quam necesse est, disciplina atque scientia sapientiae vacuum esse non posse sapientem, tam eam necesse esset invenire dum quaeritur; omnis profecto Academicorum vel calumnia, vel pertinacia, vel pervicacia, vel, ut ego interdum arbitror, congrua illi tempori ratio, simul cum ipso tempore, et cum ipsius Carneadis Ciceronisque corporibus sepulta foret. Sed quia sive vitae hujus multis variisque jactationibus, Romaniane, ut in eodem te probas, sive ingeniorum quodam stupore, vel socordia vel tarditate torpentium, sive desperatione inveniendi; quia non quam facile oculis ista lux, tam facile mentibus sapientiae sidus oboritur; sive etiam qui error omnium populorum est, falsa opinione inventae a se veritatis, nec diligenter homines quaerunt, si qui quaerunt, et a quaerendi voluntate avertuntur; evenit ut scientia raro paucisque proveniat: eoque fit, ut Academicorum arma, quando cum eis ad manus venit, nec mediocribus viris, sed acutis et bene eruditis, invicta et quasi Vulcania videantur. Quamobrem contra illos fluctus procellasque fortunae, cum obnitendum remis qualiumcumque virtutum, tum in primis divinum auxilium omni devotione atque pietate implorandum est; ut intentio constantissima bonorum studiorum teneat cursum suum, a quo eam nullus casus excutiat, quominus illam philoso-

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

1. If, in the course of the search for wisdom, the discovery of its art and science were as inevitable as is the fact that a wise man cannot be without it, then all the craftiness and stubborn persistence of the Academics—or, as I sometimes believe, the entire characteristic culture of the age—would have been buried with that same era, buried with the very bodies of Carneades and Cicero. However, Romanianus, it is a fact that knowledge but seldom grows into wisdom, and only for the few. This is due either to the manifold turmoils of this life, in which case you present yourself as an outstanding example; or to a certain languor, sloth or dullness of sluggish minds; or to despair of discovery, since the star of wisdom does not rise before the mind as easily as this light appears to the eyes; or to an error that is common to all peoples, namely, a false assurance of having already found the truth. Hence it happens that if men make any search at all, they do not make a diligent search; and they acquire an aversion towards learning.¹ And consequently, when one comes to handgrips with the Academics, their weapons seem invincible and almost Vulcanian²—not only to the mediocre, but even to those of acumen and erudition. Against those tides and tempests of fortune, not only must one struggle with the oars of all available powers, but most especially must he implore divine aid with all devotion and piety, so that the ever constant aim of good endeavors may steer its course, and so that no mishap may buffet it to such degree that the very safe and delightful port of wisdom may not give it

1 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xv, 46.

2 Virgil, *Aeneid*, Bk. VIII, v. 535; Bk. XII, v. 739.

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phiae tutissimus jucundissimusque portus accipiat. Haec prima tua causa est; hinc tibi metuo, hinc te cupio liberari, hinc, si modo dignus sim qui impetrem, quotidianis votis auras tibi prosperas orare non cesso; oro autem ipsam summi Dei Virtutem atque Sapientiam. Quid est enim aliud, quem mysteria nobis tradunt Dei Filium?

2. Multum autem me adjuvabis pro te deprecantem, si non nos exaudiri posse desperes, nitarisque nobiscum et tu non solum votis, sed etiam voluntate, atque illa tua naturali mentis altitudine, propter quam te quaero, qua singulariter delector, quam semper admiror, quae in te, proh nefas! illis rerum domesticarum nubibus quasi fulmen involvitur, et multos, ac pene omnes latet: me autem, et alium, vel tertium, familiarissimos tuos latere non potest, qui saepe non solum attente audivimus murmura tua, sed etiam nonnulla fulgura fulminibus propria conspeximus. Quis enim, ut caetera pro tempore taceam et unum commemorem; quis, inquam, tam subito unquam tantum intonuit, tantumque lumine mentis emicuit, ut sub uno¹ fremitu rationis, et quodam coruscamine temperantiae, uno die illa pridie saevissima penitus libido moreretur? Ergone non erumpet aliquando ista virtus, et multorum desperantium risus in horrorem stuporemque convertet; et locuta in terris quasi quaedam futurorum signa, rursus projecto totius cor-

1 Quatuor mss. *illo*.

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entry. This is your initial step. Hence, I am anxious about you; hence, I desire you to be liberated; hence, in my daily devotions I do not cease to pray for prosperous winds on your behalf—if indeed I be worthy to obtain my petitions. But then, I am beseeching the very Power and Wisdom of the most high God; for what else is He whom the Mysteries reveal to us as the Son of God?³

2. But you will be of great help to me while I am making supplication for you, if you will not despair of our being able to be heard, and if you will—in co-operation with us—strive vigorously not only by yearnings but also by good will and by your natural high-mindedness, on account of which I seek to win you, in which I take singular delight, and which I am constantly admiring. But, alas! in you it is concealed—a thunderbolt, so to speak—in those clouds of domestic affairs: it remains hidden from many persons, and, in fact, from almost everybody. But it cannot escape the notice of your very intimate friends—myself and one or two others—who have often not only attently listened to your rumblings but also beheld your numerous strokes of brilliancy, which were more like flashes of lightning. Who indeed—to confine myself to one instance for the time being, and not to mention the others—who, I ask, ever emitted such a sudden thunderous sound and flashed with such a stroke of intelligence, that with a single roar of reason and a certain flash of temperance, sensuous desire that raged so violently the day before, died within him in a single day? Consequently, will that power not burst forth some day, and change into dread and amazement the jeers of many who now despair? And having shown on earth some signs, as it were, of things to come, will it not hasten

3 I Cor. I, 24. At this period in his life, Augustine usually employs the terms, *mysteria* and *sacra*, to designate the Sacred Scriptures. (Cf. Bk. III, ch. 20, no. 43).

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poris onere recurret in coelum? Ergone Augustinus de Romano frustra ista dixit? Non sinet ille cui me totum dedi, quem nunc recognoscere aliquantum coepi.

II

3. Ergo aggredere mecum philosophiam: hic est quidquid te anxium saepe, atque dubitantem mirabiliter solet movere. Non enim metuo aut a socordia morum, aut a tarditate ingenii tui. Quis enim te quando aliquantum respirare concessum est, in sermonibus nostris vigilantior? quis acutior apparuit? Ergone tibi gratiam non repensabo? an fortasse paululum debeo? Tu me adolescentulum pauperem ad peregrina¹ studia pergentem, et domo et sumptu, et quod plus est, animo excepisti. Tu patre orbatum amicitia consolatus es, hortatione animasti, ope adjuvisti. Tu in nostro ipso municipio, favore, familiaritate, communicatione domus tuae pene tecum clarum primatemque me fecisti. Tu Carthaginem illustrioris professionis gratia remeantem, cum tibi soli² et meorum nulli consilium meum spemque aperuissem, quamvis aliquantum illo tibi insito, quia ibi jam docebam, patriae amore cunctatus es: tamen ubi evincere adolescen-

1 In mss. pervetustis deest vox, *peregrina*.

2 In P. B. deest, *soli*.

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back to heaven⁴ when the burden of the entire body will have been cast off? Would you say that Augustine has mistakenly said this about Romanianus? He to Whom I have dedicated my entire self, and of Whom I now begin to have a little knowledge—He will not permit it.

4 For a similar expression, *cf.* Chapter IX, no. 22.

CHAPTER II

3. Therefore, enter upon philosophy with me; for there is in it everything that is wont to arouse you in your frequent spells of doubt and anxiety. To be sure, I have no misgiving with regard to either indolence of disposition or slowness of wit on your part; for who has ever shown himself more alert and keen than you in our conversations, whenever you were afforded a short relief from anxiety? Shall I not return you a favor? Or perhaps I am slightly indebted to you? When I was a poor boy, pursuing studies that were not available in our own town, you provided me with a home, with funds, and with something even better—courage.¹ When I was bereaved of a father, you consoled me with your friendship, roused me with your encouragement, and aided me with your resources. By your favor and friendship, and by the sharing of your home with me,² you made me almost as renowned and prominent a personage as yourself in our town. And when I was returning to Carthage for the sake of a more illustrious profession,³ and had revealed my plan and prospect to you alone, and to no member of my own family, you indeed hesitated for

1 *Cf. Confessions*, II, iii.

2 Within a year after joining the Manichaean sect at Carthage, Augustine returned to his mother's home at Tagaste. Because of his being a Manichaean, she forbade him to remain there. *Cf. Confessions*, Bk. III, ch. XI.

3 *Cf. Confessions*, IV, vii.

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tis cupiditatem, ad ea quae videbantur meliora tendentis, nequisti; ex dehortatore in adiutorem mira benevolentiae moderatione conversus es. Tu necessariis omnibus iter adminiculasti meum. Tu ibidem rursus, qui cunabula, et quasi nidum studiorum meorum foveras, jam volare audentis sustentasti rudimenta. Tu etiam cum te absente atque ignorante navigassem, nihil³ succensens quod non tecum communicassem ut solerem, atque aliud quidvis quam contumaciam suspicans, mansisti inconcussus in amicitia; nec plus ante oculos tuos liberi deserti a magistro, quam nostrae mentis penetralia puritasque versata est.

4. Postremo quidquid de otio meo modo gaudeo; quod a superfluarum cupiditatum vinculis evolavi, quod depositis oneribus mortuarum curarum, respiro, resipisco, redeo ad me; quod quaero intentissimus veritatem, quod invenire jam ingredior, quod me ad summum ipsum modum⁴ perventurum esse confido; tu animasti, tu impulisti, tu fecisti. Cujus autem minister fueris, plus adhuc fide concepi, quam ratione comprehendi. Nam cum praesens praesenti tibi exposuissem interiores motus animi mei, vehementerque ac saepius assererem, nullam mihi videri prosperam fortunam, nisi quae otium philosophandi daret; nullam beatam vitam, nisi qua in philosophia viveretur: sed me tanto meorum onere, quorum ex officio meo vita penderet, multisque necessitatibus, vel vani mei pudoris, vel ineptae meorum miseriae refrenari: tam magno es elatus

3 Am. Er. *nonnihil succensens*, quibus suffragantur aliquot mss. melioris notae.

4 Er. et Lov. *ad ipsum summum bonum*.

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a while—by reason of your innate love of homeland, because I had already begun to teach there. Nevertheless, by a marvelous tempering of good will, you became a helper instead of a dissuader when you were unable to subdue the yearning of a young man striving for what seemed to be better things: you furnished my journey with everything it needed. And you, who had tended the cradle or, as it were, warmed the nest of my earliest studies in that city—you now again supported my first faint efforts when I dared to fly. And when, in your absence and without your knowledge, I had sailed away, you were by no means angry because I had not informed you as I was wont to do. Suspecting anything but obstinacy, you continued steadfast in friendship. And the pupils deserted by the teacher were not more plain before your eyes than the inmost recesses of our mind and its innocence of guile.

4. Finally, it is you that have inspired, advanced and effected whatever peace I am now most freely enjoying: the fact that I have escaped from the chains of excessive desires; that I have laid aside the burdens of deadly cares, and am again breathing easily, recovering my senses, and returning to myself; that I am most earnestly engaged in the quest for the truth, and have already begun to find it; and that I am confident of reaching even the ultimate measure.⁴ Up to the present time, however, I have grasped by faith, more than I have comprehended by reason, Him whose minister you have been.

For when I had, face to face, disclosed to you my inner mental perturbations, and when I repeatedly asseverated that to me no fortune seemed favorable unless it afforded leisure to apply oneself to philosophy; that no life was a happy one except insofar as it was lived in philosophy; but that I was held back by so great a burden of kinsfolk

4 In the *De beata vita*, (IV, 32), Augustine says: "The measure of the mind is wisdom."

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gaudio, tam sancto hujus vitae inflammatus ardore, ut te diceret, si tu ab illarum importunarum litium vinculis aliquo modo eximereris, omnia mea vincula etiam patri-monii tui mecum participatione rupturum.

5. Itaque cum admoto nobis fomite discessisses, nunquam cessavimus inhiantes in philosophiam, atque illam vitam quae inter nos placuit atque convenit, prorsus nihil aliud cogitare: atque id constanter quidem, sed minus acriter agebamus; putabamus tamen satis nos agere. Et quoniam nondum aderat ea flamma, quae summa nos arreptura erat; illam qua lenta aestuabamus, arbitrabamur vel esse maximam. Cum ecce tibi libri quidam pleni, ut ait Cel-sinus, bonas res arabicas ubi exhalarunt in nos, ubi illi flammulae instillarunt pretiosissimi unguenti guttas paucissimas; incredibile, Romaniane, incredibile, et ultra quam de me fortasse et tu credis; quid amplius dicam? etiam mihi ipsi de meipso incredibile incendium concitarunt. Quis me tunc honor, quae hominum pompa, quae inanis famae cupiditas, quod denique hujus mortalis vitae fomentum atque retinaculum commovebat? Prorsus totus in me cursim redibam. Respexi tantum, confiteor, quasi de itinere in illam reli-

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whose very life depended on my occupation, and by various expenses that were occasioned either by my own false shame or by the wretched distress of my relatives—on such occasions, you used to be so elated with gladness and so inflamed with a holy ardor for this kind of life, that you used to say you would break all my chains by sharing even your own patrimony with me if you were in any way freed from the shackles of those troublesome litigations.⁵

5. And although you had taken your departure after the kindling had been placed beside us, we never slackened in our yearning for philosophy and for the mode of life which won favor among us; and we agreed to make no other plans whatever. We were aiming at it steadily, but less eagerly. And yet, we thought that we were doing enough. And because we were not yet beside the blaze that was to seize upon us at its height, we thought that the flickering flame by which we were being warmed was the greatest possible fire. But behold! as soon as certain plentiful books, as Celsinus⁶ says, exhaled sweet Arabian fragrance over us, as soon as they shed a very few tiny drops of most precious perfume on that diminutive flame, they at once enkindled in me such a conflagration that—incredible, Romanianus, truly incredible; and perhaps beyond even your belief in me: what more can I say?—I could scarcely believe it of myself. What importance did I then attach to any honor? Was I affected by human pomp? by a craving for empty fame? or, in fine, by the bond and bondage of this mortal life? Truly, I was fast returning completely to my senses. And, as if returning from a journey, I but be-

5 Cf. *Confessions*, VI, xiv.

6 Celsinus or Celsus. (Cf. A. Casamassa, O.S.A., in *Acta Hebdomadae Augustinianae-Thomisticae*, Turin, 1931, p. 89). In the *Soliloquies*, (I, xii, 21), Augustine mentions Cornelius Celsus, "who says that wisdom is the supreme good." In his preface to the *De haeresibus*, he refers to Celsus, "who had compiled, in six books, the tenets of all the founders of distinct philosophic schools."

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gionem, quae pueris nobis insita est, et medullitus implicata: verum autem ipsa me ad se nescientem rapiebat. Itaque titubans, properans, haesitans arripio apostolum Paulum: Neque enim vere isti, inquam, tanta potuissent, vixissentque ita ut eos vixisse manifestum est, si eorum Litterae atque rationes huic tanto bono adversarentur. Perlegi totum intentissime atque cautissime.⁵

6. Tunc vero quantulocumque jam lumine asperso, tanta se mihi philosophiae facies aperuit, at, non dicam tibi, qui ejus incognitae fame⁶ semper arsisisti, sed si ipsi adversario tuo, a quo nescio utrum plus exercearis quam impediaris, eam demonstrare potuissem; nae ille et baias, et amoena pomperia,⁷ et delicata nitidaque convivia, et domesticos histriones, postremo quidquid eum acriter commovet in quascumque delicias, abjiciens et relinquens, ad hujus pulchritudinem blandus amator et sanctus, mirans, anhelans, aestuans advolaret. Habet enim et ille, quod confitendum est, quoddam decus animi, vel potius decoris quasi sementem,⁸ quod erumpere in veram pulchritudinem nitens, tortuose ac deformiter inter scabra vitiorum, et inter opinionum fallacium dumeta frondescit: tamen non cessat frondescere, et paucis acute ac diligenter in densa intuentibus quantum sinitur eminere. Inde est illa hospitalitas,

5 Bad. Am. Er. et mss. quamplures, *atque castissime*.

6 In hactenus vulgatis et aliquot mss. legitur, *incognitae fama*; aut, *incognitae famae*. Sed castigatius in aliis codicibus, *fame*.

7 Forte, *pomaria*.

8 Par. Er. Ven. Lov. *seminarium*.

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held again—I avow it—that religion which had been implanted in us in our boyhood, and which had been, as it were, interwoven with the very marrow of our being. But that religion was drawing me to itself, although I knew it not. Trembling, irresolute, and impatient, I snatched up [the writings of] Paul the Apostle. For, I say, surely those men could not have accomplished such great things, and could not have lived in such manner as they manifestly did live, if their writings and their reasons were in opposition with so great a good. I read the whole book with the greatest attention and care.⁷

6. And then philosophy's countenance, howsoever dim the light that was cast upon it, revealed itself to me. It was such a countenance that if I had been able to describe it to that adversary of yours—I shall not say, "to you," for you have always been ardently desirous of it, although as yet unknown to you; but "to that adversary of yours": and I know not whether you are being more exercised than impeded by him—then would he forsake and relinquish the seashore resorts, the beautiful parks, the delightful and elegant banquets, the private theatrical exhibitions. In fine, ✓ he would shun everything that is strongly inciting him towards any pleasures whatsoever; and as a fond and pious lover, he would fly to its beauty, as the object of his admiration, the aim of his desire, and the end of his longing. For we must admit that he has a certain mental adornment, or rather the seed, as it were, of such an adornment. And while it strives to sprout into true beauty, it ✓ produces twisted and misshapen leaves amid the rough thickets of vices and errors.⁸ However, it is incessantly producing leaves; and to the few who peer—insofar as that is permitted—intently and diligently into the dense entangle-

⁷ Cf. *Confessions*, VII, ix, xxi; *De beata vita*, I, 4.

⁸ "... the thickets of the Stoics." Cicero, *Academ.* II, xxxv, 112.

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inde in conviviis multa humanitatis condimenta, inde ipsa elegantia, nitor, mundissima faciens rerum omnium, et undique cuncta perfundens adumbratae venustatis urbanitas.

III

7. Philocalia ista vulgo dicitur: ne contemnas nomen hac ex vulgi nomine: nam philocalia et philosophia prope similiter cognominatae sunt, et quasi gentiles¹ inter se videri volunt, et sunt. Quid est enim philosophia? Amor sapientiae. Quid philocalia? Amor pulchritudinis. Quaere de Graecis. Quid ergo sapientia? nonne ipsa vera est pulchritudo? Germanae igitur istae sunt prorsus, et eodem parente procreatae:² sed illa visco libidinis detracta coelo suo, et inclusa cavea populari, viciniam tamen nominis tenuit, ad commonendum aucupem ne se³ contemnat. Hanc igitur sine pennis sordidatam et egentem volitans libere soror saepe agnoscit, sed raro liberat: non enim philocalia ista unde genus ducat agnoscit, nisi philosophia. Quam totam fabulam (nam subito Æsopus factus sum) Licentius tibi carmine suavius indicabit: poeta est enim pene perfectus. Ergo ille, si veram pulchritudinem cujus falsae amator est, sanatis renudatisque paululum oculis posset intueri, quanta voluptate philosophiae gremio se involveret? Quomodo ibi te cognitum, sicut verum fratrem amplecte-

1 In quinque mss. *germanae*.

2 *Retract.*, lib. I, cap. I, n. 3.

3 Par. Er. Ven. Lov. *illam*.

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ments, it continues to be plainly visible. Hence that kindliness, hence the many relishes of refinement at banquets, hence the extreme elegance, hence the splendor and the most orderly arrangement of all things—and the charm of a reflected beauty everywhere, adorning everything.⁹

⁹ He is referring to the Stoics. Cf. Cicero, *De fin.*, I, xviii-xix.

CHAPTER III

7. This is commonly called philocaly. Do not scorn this name, just because it is of common usage; for philocaly and philosophy have very similar surnames. They would seem to be—in fact, they are—of the same family, so to speak. In fact, what is philosophy? It is love of wisdom. And what is philocaly? It is love of beauty. Consult the Greeks on this point. But what is wisdom? Is it not the true beauty itself? Therefore, those two are assuredly akin, begotten of the same parent.¹ But philocaly was enticed from her lofty height by the allurements of wanton desires, and was pent up in a common cage. Nevertheless, she retained the similarity of name, in order to admonish her captor not to despise her. Consequently, the sister that soars without restraint, often recognizes this wingless and squalid and needy one. But she seldom sets her free, for it is only philosophy that knows whence this philocaly derives her lineage. Of this entire fable, Licentius will give you a more agreeable rendering in poetic form: he is almost a perfect poet, and I have suddenly become an Aesop. But if that lover of this false beauty could—with eyes restored to health, and with the blindfolds removed a little—gaze upon the true beauty, then with what transports of delight would he cuddle up in the lap of philosophy! How he would embrace you when he had recognized you there

¹ Cf. *Retract.*, I, i, 3. ✓

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retur? Miraris haec, et forsitan rides. Quid si haec explicarem ut volebam? quid si saltem vox, si adhuc facies videri a te non potest, ipsius philosophiae posset audiri? Mirareris profecto; sed non rideres, non desperares. Crede mihi, de nullo desperandum est, de talibus autem minime. Omnino sunt exempla; facile evadit, facile revolat⁴ hoc genus avium, multis inclusis multum mirantibus.

8. Sed ad nos redeamus, nos inquam, Romaniane, philosophemur: reddam tibi gratiam, filius tuus coepit jam philosophari: ego eum reprimo, ut disciplinis necessariis prius excultus vigentior et firmior insurgat, quarum te ne metuas expertem, si bene te novi, auras⁵ tibi liberas tantum opto. Nam de indole quid dicam? Utinam non tam rara esset in hominibus, quam certa est in te! Restant duo vitia, et impedimenta inveniendae veritatis, a quibus tibi non multum timeo; timeo tamen ne te contemnas, atque inventurum esse desperes, aut certe ne invenisse te credas. Quorum primum, si tamen inest, ista tibi disputatio fortasse detrahet. Saepius enim succensuisti Academicis, eo quidem gravius, quo minus eruditus esses; sed eo libentius, quod veritatis amore illiciebaris. Itaque jam cum Alypio, te fautore, configam, et tibi facile persuadebo quod volo, probabiliter tamen. Nam ipsum verum non videbis, nisi in philosophiam totus intraveris. Illud autem alterum quod

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as a true brother! Are you surprised at this? Or perhaps you laugh? What if I could explain those things as I wanted to? What if at least the voice of philosophy herself could be heard, even though her face cannot as yet be seen by you? Then you would be truly surprised—but you would not laugh, or abandon hope. Believe me, we should not abandon hope for anybody—and especially for such men as these. These are merely examples. Birds of this kind easily fly forth, and easily fly back—to the great surprise of many who remain encaged.

8. Now, Romanianus, to return to ourselves. Let us, I say, apply ourselves to philosophy. I should like to thank you: your son has already begun to apply himself to philosophy. But I am restraining him, so that he may be first well drilled in the prerequisite branches of learning, and then wax strong and vigorous. As for yourself, you are to have no fear that you are destitute of those arts. If I know you well, I wish you nothing else than favorable breezes. But what shall I say about your talents? Would that they were not so rare in men, as they are distinguished in you. There are, however, two vicious hindrances to the finding of truth; but with regard to them, I have no great fear for you. Nevertheless, I have a fear that you underrate yourself and that you despair of ever finding it, or that you confidently believe you have already found it. But if you happen to have the first of those two hindrances, perhaps this disputation will relieve you of it; for you have very often been enraged at the Academics—indeed all the more violently in proportion to your lack of erudition, but all the more wholeheartedly because you were captivated by love of the truth. With your favor, therefore, I shall debate with Alypius; and I shall easily persuade you to accept my views—only with probability, however, for you will not see truth itself unless you enter into philosophy with your whole being. As to that other hindrance, namely, your presuming

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te fortasse aliquid invenisse praesumis, quamvis a nobis jam quaerens, dubitansque discesseris, tamen si quid superstitionis in animum revolutum est, ejicietur profecto, vel cum tibi aliquam inter nos disputationem de religione misero, vel cum praesens tecum multa contulero.

9. Ego enim nunc aliud nihil ago, quam me ipse purgo a vanis perniciosisque opinionibus. Itaque non dubito melius mihi esse, quam tibi. Unum tantum est unde invideam fortunae tuae, quod solus frueris Luciliano meo:⁶ an et tu invides quia dixi, meo? Sed quid dixi aliud quam tuo, et omnium quicumque unum sumus? De quo tamen ut subvenias desiderio meo, quid te rogem? Tu te ipse pro me roga quantum scis, quia debes. Sed nunc ambobus dico, cavete ne quid vos nosse arbitremini, nisi quod ita didiceritis, saltem ut nostis, unum, duo, tria, quatuor simul collecta in summam fieri decem. Sed item cavete ne vos in philosophia veritatem aut non cognituros, aut nullo modo ita posse cognosci arbitremini. Nam mihi vel potius illi credite qui ait, *Quaerite et invenietis*,⁷ nec cognitionem desperandam esse, et manifestiorem futuram, quam sunt illi numeri. Nunc ad propositum veniamus. Jam enim sero coepi metuere, ne hoc principium modum excederet, et

4 Sic Am. Er. et prope omnes mss. At Bad. et Lov. *evolat*.

5 Am. Er. Lov. *aures*.

6 Sic scribitur in vetustioribus et pluribus mss. Porro in prius edd. *Luciniano meo*; et in mss. quatuor, *Luciano*.

7 Matth. VII, 7.

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perhaps that you have found something—although you were seeking and doubting when you departed from us—if any part of the superstition has rolled back into your mind, it will be straightway cast out, either when I send you one of our own disputations on religion, or when I discuss many points with you face to face.²

9. At present, I am doing nothing but cleansing myself from vain and pernicious opinions. Consequently, I have no doubt that I am better off than you. In only one thing do I envy your good fortune, namely, that all by yourself you are enjoying the company of my Lucilian. And perhaps you, in turn, are jealous because I have called him *mine*. But what else have I called him except your Lucilian and the Lucilian of all of us who are one. And why should I ask you to come to the relief of my longing for him? Rather, ask you that favor of yourself, insofar as you know that you owe it. But I now say to both of you: beware lest you think that you know anything except what you have learned at least in the manner in which you know that one *plus* two *plus* three *plus* four is ten. And likewise, beware lest you think either that in philosophy you will not gain a thorough knowledge of the truth, or that truth can by no means become known in this manner. Believe me—or rather, believe Him who says, “Seek, and you shall find.”³—that knowledge is not to be despaired of, but that it will be even more manifest than those numbers. Let us now come to the purpose. In fact, I have begun to fear—rather late, to be sure—that this foreword is ex-

2 The two hindrances are Skepticism and Manichaeism. He fears that Romanianus may have returned to the Manichaean superstition (Cf. Bk. I, no. 3), although he was an adherent to the New Academy, “seeking and doubting,” when he departed from Milan. This disputation was to disabuse him of Skepticism.

Approximately four years later, Augustine composed the treatise, *On the True Religion*, and dedicated it to Romanianus. He devotes all of the ninth chapter to a refutation of Manichaeism.

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non est leve. Nam modus procul dubio divinus est: sed fefellerit cum dulciter ducit, ero cautior cum sapiens fuero.

IV

10. Post pristinum sermonem, quem in primum librum contulimus, septem fere diebus a disputando fuimus otiosi, cum tres tantum Virgilio libros post primum recenseremus, atque ut in tempore congruere videbatur, tractaremus. Quo tamen opere Licentius in poeticae¹ studium sic inflammatus est, ut aliquantum mihi etiam reprimendus videretur. Jam enim ab hac intentione ad nullam se rem devocari libenter ferebat. Tandem tamen ad retractandam quam distuleramus de Academicis quaestionem, cum a me, quantum potui, lumen philosophiae laudaretur, non invitatus accessit: et forte dies ita serenus effulserat, ut nulli prorsus rei magis, quam serenandis animis nostris congruere videretur. Maturius itaque solito lectos reliquimus, paululumque cum rusticis egimus, quod tempus urgebat. Tum Alypius: Antequam vos, inquit, audiam de Academicis disputantes, volo mihi legatur sermo ille vester quem dicitis me absente perfectum: non enim possum aliter, cum inde hujus disceptationis occasio nata sit, in audiendis vobis non aut errare, aut certe laborare. Quod cum factum esset, et in eo pene totum antemeridianum tempus consumptum

1 Par. *poetriae*. Er. Ven. Lov. *poeticum studium*.

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ceeding due measure. And this is nothing trivial, since moderation is undoubtedly godlike; but it escapes notice while it gently leads. I shall be more cautious when I have become wise. ✓

CHAPTER IV

10. After the initial disputation—which we have compiled into the first book—we discontinued the discussion for about seven days, since we were engaged in reviewing the second, third and fourth books of Virgil,⁴ and in discoursing upon them as seemed fitting at the proper time. In this exercise, Licentius became so passionately attached to poetry that he seemed to me to be in need of some restraint; for he was unwilling to be called away from this preoccupation to anything else. At length, however, while the excellence of philosophy was being extolled by me to the best of my ability, he willingly joined in the renewed discussion on the Academics. And it happened that the day⁵ had dawned so calm and clear that it seemed better suited for nothing else than for calming and clearing our minds. So we arose from our beds earlier than usual, and spent a very short while with the farm hands, because time was pressing.

Then Alypius says: "Before I hear you discoursing on the Academics, I should like to have read to me that discourse of yours which, you tell me, was finished during my absence; for otherwise, since the occasion of the present discussion arises from that discourse, I cannot help but misunderstand some things, or at least experience difficulty in understanding you."

When this had been done, and since we saw that almost

³ *Matt.* VII, 7.

⁴ They had already reviewed the first book. *Cf.* I, v, 15.

⁵ November 19, 386. See note 8, page 252.

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videremus; redire ab agro, qui deambulantes nos acceperat, domum instituimus. Et Licentius: Quaeso, inquit, ante prandium mihi breviter totam Academicorum sententiam exponendo repetere ne graveris, ne quid in ea me fugiat, quod pro partibus meis sit. Faciam, inquam, et eo libentius quo de hac re cogitans parum prandeas. Ne, inquit ille, isthinc securus sis: nam et multos, et maxime patrem meum saepe animadverti eo edaciorum, quo refertior curis esset. Deinde tu quoque de istis metris cogitantem non sic expertus es, ut cura mea mensa secunda sit. Quod quidem apud meipsum mirari soleo: quid enim sibi vult, quod tunc cibum pertinacius appetimus cum in aliud intendimus animum? Aut quid est quod² manibus et dentibus nostris, occupatis nobis, animus imperiosus fit? Audi potius, inquam, de Academicis quod rogaveras, ne te metra ista volventem, non solum in epulis sine metro, sed etiam in quaestionibus patiar. Si quid autem pro mea parte occultabo, prodest Alypius. Bona fide tua opus est, inquit Alypius: nam si metuendum est, ne aliquid occultes, a me deprehendi difficile posse arbitror eum, a quo me ista didicisse nullus qui me novit ignorat, praesertim cum in prodendo vero non magis victoriae, quam animo tuo consulturus sis.

2 Plerique mss. *Aut quis est qui manibus. Mox ex iis nonnulli, et dentibus nostris nobis occupatis nimis imperiosus fit. Alii porro tres, et dentibus nostris occupatis minus animus imperiosus fit.*

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the entire forenoon had been spent in doing it, we decided to return home from the field where we were strolling. And Licentius says:

"I beg you not to refuse to sum up the entire teaching of the Academics, by expounding it to me before lunch, lest I overlook some point in it which would be of help to my side."

I say: I shall do that, and all the more willingly because you will eat very little while you are thinking on this matter.

"Be not at ease on that score," he says, "for I have frequently noticed that many persons, and especially my father, are all the more eager for food according as they are filled with anxieties. And you have never noticed me thinking on those metres in such manner that the table would be beyond my attention. Indeed I often wonder why it is that we crave for food more persistently when we are holding our attention fixed on something else. Or why does the mind become more masterful when we are pre-occupied with our hands and teeth?"

I say: Pay attention to what you had asked about the Academics, lest I have to endure you not only eating beyond measure while you are pondering on those poetic measures, but also raising measureless questions. And if I keep some point hidden for my side, Alypius will reveal it.

"Good faith is demanded of you," says Alypius. "For if we are to fear that you are concealing some point, then I believe that I cannot easily expose him from whom—as all my acquaintances well know—I have learned all those points: it is demanded especially because, by revealing truth, you will be no more mindful of victory than of your own purpose."

V

11. Agam, inquam, bona fide, quoniam de jure praescribis. Nam et Academicis placuit, nec homini scientiam posse contingere earum duntaxat rerum, quae ad philosophiam pertinent; nam caetera curare se Carneades negabat; et tamen hominem posse esse sapientem, sapientisque totum munus, ut abs te quoque, Licenti, illo sermone dissertum est, in conquisitione veri explicari. Ex quo confici, ut nulli etiam rei sapiens assentiatur: erret enim necesse est, quod sapienti nefas est, si assentiatur rebus incertis. Et omnia incerta esse non dicebant solum, verum etiam copiosissimis¹ rationibus affirmabant. Sed verum non posse comprehendere, ex illa stoici Zenonis definitione arripuisse videbantur, qui ait id verum percipi posse, quod ita esset animo impressum ex eo unde esset, ut esse non posset ex eo unde non esset. Quod brevius planiusque sic dicitur, his signis verum posse comprehendere, quae signa non potest habere quod falsum est. Hoc prorsus non posse inveniri, vehementissime ut convincerent incubuerunt. Inde dissensiones philosophorum, inde sensuum fallaciae, inde somnia furoresque, inde pseudomeni et soritae in illius causae patrocinio viguerunt. Et cum ab eodem Zenone ac-

1 In mss. quinque, *perniciosissimis*.

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CHAPTER V

11. I say: I shall act with good faith because you prescribe it justly. The Academics were of the opinion that certain knowledge [*scientia*] cannot accrue to a man with respect to those things precisely which pertain to philosophy—indeed Carneades used to say that he was paying no attention to the other things; that a man can nevertheless be wise; that the rôle of a wise man is completely developed in a diligent search for truth—as was minutely discussed also by you, Licentius, in that discourse of yours; that, consequently, a wise man gives assent to nothing at all, for if he were to give assent to things uncertain he would inevitably fall into error—which is something abominable for a wise man.¹ And they not only claimed that all things are uncertain, but they also strengthened that claim by a most copious supply of arguments. However, it is from the definition by Zeno the Stoic that they seem to have seized the aphorism that truth cannot be apprehended;² for he says that that truth could be apprehended, which would be so impressed on the mind from the source whence it proceeded as it could not be impressed from a source whence it did not proceed.³ This is more briefly and intelligibly expressed by saying that truth can be recognized through those marks which the false cannot have. They made strenuous efforts to establish the conviction that such a thing could not be found. Thenceforth, dissensions of philosophers, illusions of the senses, dreams and deliriums, sophistries and sorites, flourished in defense of that contention.⁴

1 "To approve the false for the true, is very disgraceful." Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xx, 66.

2 "We say that this was most correctly defined by Zeno." *id.*, *ibid.*, II, vi, 18.

3 Almost verbatim as found in Cicero. Cf. *ibid.*, II, vi, 18. Not so briefly expressed as by him in *Academ.*, II, xxiv, 77.

4 These facts and fallacies are mentioned by Cicero. *Ibid.*, II,

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cepissent, nihil esse turpius quam opinari, confecerunt calidissime, ut si nihil percipi posset, et esset opinatio turpissima, nihil unquam sapiens approbaret.

12. Hinc eis invidia magna conflata est: videbatur enim esse consequens, ut nihil ageret, qui nihil approbaret. Unde dormientem semper, et officiorum omnium desertorem, sapientem suum Academici describere videbantur, quem nihil approbare censebant. Hic illi inducto quodam probabili quod etiam verisimile nominabant, nullo modo cessare sapientem ab officiis asserebant, cum haberet quid sequeretur; veritas autem sive propter naturae tenebras quasdam, sive propter similitudinem rerum, vel obruta, vel confusa latitaret. Quamvis et ipsam refrenationem et quasi suspensionem assensionis magnam prorsus actionem sapientis esse dicebant. Videor mihi breviter totum, ut voluisti, exposuisse, nihilque recessisse a praescriptione, Alypi, tua; id est egisse, ut dicitur, bona fide. Si enim aliquid vel non ita ut est dixi, vel forte non dixi; nihil voluntate a me factum est. Bona ergo fides est, ex animi sententia. Homini

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And because they had it from the same Zeno that nothing is more disgraceful than to form opinions, they very ingeniously concluded that if nothing can be known and if opinion is most disgraceful, then a wise man ought never to accept anything as certain.⁵

12. For this reason, a great deal of animosity was aroused against them; for it seemed to follow as a logical consequence that a man who accepts nothing as certain, must refrain from all activity.⁶ And because the Academics believed that their wise man accepts nothing as certain, they seemed to describe him as a man always inactive and shirking all duties.⁷ Now bringing forward a certain kind of probability, which they termed *truth-like*, they maintained that a wise man is by no means neglectful of duties, since he has something to guide him, although the truth lies hidden, buried or confused, either on account of a certain natural obscurity or on account of the similarity of things.⁸ Moreover, they claimed that the very act of withholding, as it were, or curbing assent was a great exploit on the part of a wise man.⁹

Now, I believe I have expounded the whole system briefly, as you wished, and that I have not fallen short of your injunction, Alypius— that is, I have acted with good faith, as they say. For if I have stated something incorrectly or if I have omitted anything, it was not intentionally done by me. Therefore, to the best of my knowledge, good faith has been maintained. It ought to be clear that a man

xv-xvi, xxv-xxvi, xlviii, *et passim*.

The term, *sorites*, did not then have its present-day meaning. "They call them *sorites*, which make a heap by adding a grain—a most faulty and captious kind of argument." *Id.*, *ibid.*, II, xvi, 49.

5 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xviii, 59.

6 Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xix, 61; *ibid.*, xxxiii, 108.

7 *Id.*, *ibid.*, II, viii, 25.

8 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xxxi, 99.

9 *Id.*, *ibid.*, II, xxxiv, 108.

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enim homo falsus docendus, fallax cavendus debet videri: quorum prius magistrum bonum, posterius discipulum cautum desiderat.

13. Tum Alypius: Gratum, inquit, habeo, cum et Licentio a te satisfactum est, et me onere imposito relevasti. Non enim magis tibi verendum erat, ne quid explorandi mei causa minus a te diceretur, (nam alio modo qui fieri poterat?) quam mihi, si in quoquam te prodere fuisset necesse. Quare faxis, ut illud quod deest, non tam percontationi, quam ipsi percontanti, de differentia novae ac veteris Academiae, ne te pigeat exponere. Prorsus, inquam, fateor, piget. Quare beneficium dederis (nam et hoc quod commemoras, ad rem maxime pertinere negare non possum), si me paululum conquiescente, apud me distinguere ista nomina, et causam novae Academiae aperire volueris. Crederem, inquit, me quoque a prandio te avocare voluisse, ni te² magis a Licentio territum dudum putarem, et ejus postulatio ita nobis praescripsisset, ut ei ante prandium quidquid hujus involutionis esset, expediretur. Et cum reliqua dicere tenderet, mater nostra (nam domi jam eramus) ita nos trudere in prandium coepit, ut verba faciendi locus non esset.

2 Sic in omnibus edd. In P. B. *et*.

VI

14. Deinde, cum tantum alimentorum accepissemus, quantum compescendae fami satis esset; ad pratum regressis nobis, Alypius, Paream, inquit, sententiae tuae, nec

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deceived is to be instructed, and a deceitful man is to be shunned. Of these two cases, the first demands a good teacher; the other, a cautious pupil.

13. Then Alypius says: "I am thankful that a sufficient explanation has been given to Licentius, and that you have relieved me of the burden imposed on me. Indeed you had no more reason to fear that something might be omitted by you—by way of putting me to the test: how else could it happen?—than I had, if it became necessary to expose you in anything. Wherefore, let it not bore you now to expound that which is wanting not so much to the question as to the questioner himself, namely, the difference between the New Academy and the Old."

I say: It does utterly bore me, I confess. Accordingly, you will confer a favor if you consent to differentiate those names in my presence and to outline the case of the New Academy, while I take a brief rest; for I cannot deny that what you mention is very pertinent to the question.

"I should believe," says he, "that you wished to keep me also away from lunch, if I did not think rather that you had been frightened by Licentius a little while ago, and if his request had not prescribed for us that every complication of this question be disentangled for him before lunch."

And while he was endeavoring to continue, my mother—for we were now in the house—began to push us towards the lunch in such manner that there was no opportunity for further talking.

CHAPTER VI

14. Then, when we had partaken of sufficient nourishment to stay our hunger, and had returned to the lawn, Alypius says:

"Let me comply with your desire; nor would I dare to

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ausim recusare. Si enim nihil me fugerit, gratabor³ cum doctrinae tuae, tum etiam memoriae meae. At si in quaquam fortasse aberravero, recurabis id, ut deinceps hujusmodi delegationem non pertimescam. Novae Academiae discidium non tam contra veterem conceptum, quam contra Stoicos arbitror esse commotum. Nec vero discidium est putandum, siquidem a Zenone illatam novam quaestionem dissolvi discutique oportebat. Nam de non percipiendo, quamvis nullis conflictationibus agitata, incolens tamen etiam veterum Academicorum mentes sententia non impudenter existimata est. Quod etiam ipsius Socratis Platonisque ac reliquorum veterum auctoritate probatu facile est, qui se hactenus crediderunt ab errore posse defendi, si se assensionem non temere commisissent: quamvis propriam de hac re disputationem in scholas suas non introduxerint, nec ab illis enucleate aliquando quaesitum sit, percipi, necne veritas possit. Quod cum Zeno rude ac novum intulisset, contenderetque nihil percipi posse, nisi quod verum ita esset, ut dissimilibus notis a falso discerneretur, neque opinionem subeundam esse sapienti, atque id Archesilas audiret; negavit hujusmodi quidquam posse ab homine reperiri, neque illi opinionis naufragio sapientis committendam esse vitam. Unde etiam conclusit, nulli rei esse assentiendum.

15. Verum cum ita res se haberet, ut vetus Academia magis aucta, quam oppugnata videretur; exstitit Philonis

³ Sic mss. At edd. *gratulabor*.

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refuse. And if nothing happens to escape me, I shall thank both your learning and my own memory. But if I happen to make a mistake on any point, you will correct it, so that henceforth I may not greatly fear an assignment of this kind. I believe that the schism of the New Academy was not so much devised against the Old Academy as it was aroused against the Stoics.¹ Indeed it ought not to be regarded as a schism, in view of the fact that the occasion demanded a discussion and a refutation of the new question introduced by Zeno. For, although the theory of non-perception—occupying the minds of even the ancient Academics—was agitated by no clashing arguments, it was nevertheless decorously pondered. This is easily proved by the authority of Socrates and Plato and all the other ancients; for, although they did not introduce any special discussion of the matter into their schools, and although no express inquiry was made by them as to whether or not the truth could be perceived, yet they believed that they could be guarded against error only insofar as they refrained from rashly giving assent. But Zeno had introduced this undigested novelty, and was contending that nothing could be known except what was true in such manner that it would be distinguished from the false by their marks of dissimilarity, and that conjecturing ought not to enter the mind of a wise man. And when Arcesilas heard this, he maintained that nothing of this kind could be found by man, and that the life of a wise man ought not to be entrusted to the destructive hazards of opinion. Consequently, he concluded also that assent ought not to be given to anything.

15. "Yet, although this controversy was of such a nature that the Old Academy seemed to be strengthened rather than attacked, Antiochus, a pupil of Philo, made his ap-

¹ " . . . the New Academy, which seems to me to be the Old." *Id.*, *ibid.*, I, xii, 46.

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auditor Antiochus, qui, ut nonnullis visus est, gloriae cupidior quam veritatis, in simultatem adduxit Academiae utriusque sententias. Dicebat enim rem insolitam, et ab opinione veterum remotissimam Academicos novos conatos inducere. In quam rem veterum physicorum, aliorumque magnorum philosophorum implorabat fidem; ipsos etiam Academicos oppugnans, qui se verisimile contenderent sequi, cum ipsum verum se ignorare faterentur. Multaque argumenta collegerat, quibus nunc supersedendum arbitror: nihil tamen magis defendebat, quam verum percipere posse sapientem. Hanc puto inter Academicos novos ac veteres controversiam fuisse. Quae si secus se habet, ut Licentium plenissime informes, pro utroque postulaverim. Si vero ita est, ut dicere potui, succptam disputationem peragite.

VII

16. Tum ego: Quamdiu, inquam, Licenti, in isto nostro longiore quam putabam sermone conquiescis? Audisti qui sint Academici tui? At ille verecunde arridens, et aliquantum hac compellatione turbator: Poenitet me, inquit, tantopere affirmasse contra Trygetium, beatam vitam in veritatis inquisitione consistere. Nam me ista quaestio ita perturbat, ut vix non miser sim, qui certe vobis, si quid humanitatis geritis, videor miserandus. Sed quid me ipse ineptus crucio? Aut quid exhorreo tanta causae bonitate

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pearance and—more desirous of glory than of the truth, as many believed—brought the teachings of the respective Academies into a bitterness of opposition; for he said that the New Academics had attempted to introduce something unusual and most remote from the teaching of the Ancients. And on this matter, he pleaded for trust in the ancient cosmologists and other great philosophers, while he opposed even those Academics who maintained that they were following the truth-like, although they admitted that they did not know truth itself. He accumulated many arguments; but I believe they may be passed over for the nonce. But there was nothing he defended more vigorously than the thesis that a wise man can know truth. I think that this was the controversy between the Ancient Academics and the New. However, if the matter is otherwise, then, on behalf of both of us, I beg you to inform Licentius most fully. But if it is as I have been able to express it, then go ahead with the discussion already begun.”²

2 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, I, iv, 13-18.

CHAPTER VII

16. Then I say: Licentius, how long are you going to be silent in this discussion of ours—a discussion that is more protracted than I was expecting? Have you heard what kind of men your Academics are?

Smiling ruefully, and somewhat perturbed by this mild rebuke, he replies:

“I regret that, against Trygetius, I have so vehemently maintained that a happy life consists in a search for the truth; for this question disquiets me so much that I can scarcely help being unhappy. And if you have any human kindness, I must certainly seem deserving of your pity. But why foolishly torture myself? Or why be afraid, sustained

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subnixus? Prorsus non cedam nisi veritati. Placentne, inquam, tibi novi Academici? Plurimum, inquit. Ergo verum videntur tibi dicere? Tum ille cum jam esset assensurus, arrisione Alypii cautior factus, haesit aliquantum. Et deinde: Repete, inquit, rogatiunculam. Verumne, inquam, tibi videntur Academici dicere? Et rursum cum diu tacuisset: Utrum, ait, verum sit, nescio: probabile est tamen. Neque enim plus video quod sequar. Probabile, inquam, scisne ab ipsis etiam verisimile nominari? Ita, inquit, videtur. Ergo, inquam, verisimilis est Academicorum sententia. Ita, inquit. Jam quaeso attende, inquam, diligentius. Si quisquam fratrem tuum visum patris tui similem esse affirmet, ipsumque tuum patrem non noverit; nonne tibi insanus, aut ineptus videbitur? Et hic diu tacuit. Tum ait. Non mihi hoc videtur absurdum.

17. Cui ego cum respondere coepissem; Exspecta, inquit, quaeso paululum. Ac post arridens, Dic mihi, ait, oro te, jamne certus es de victoria tua? Tum ego: Fac me, inquam, certum esse: non ideo tamen tu causam tuam debes deserere, praesertim cum haec inter nos disputatio suscepta sit exercendi tui causa, et ad eliminandum animum provocandi. Numquidnam, inquit, aut Academicos legi,

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by such a worthy cause? I shall yield to absolutely nothing but the truth."

I say: Do the New Academics meet with your approval?

"Most decidedly," he replies.

Then, do you think they speak truth?

Although he was about to answer "yes" at this point, yet, rendered more cautious by a smile from Alypius, he hesitated for an instant. Then he says: "Repeat that little question."

I say: Do you think that the Academics speak truth?

And after a long period of silence, he again answers:

"Whether it be truth, I know not; but it is probable. And I see nothing better for me to follow."

I say: Do you know that by them the probable was also called the *truth-like*?

"So it seems," he replies.

I say: Therefore, the teaching of the Academics is *truth-like*.

"It is," he replies.

I say: Now, please pay very close attention. If some one who does not know your father, should happen to see your brother, and should say that he is like your father, would he not seem to you to be insane or foolish?

He now remained silent for some time, and then said:

"That does not seem absurd to me."

17. "Wait a moment, please," he exclaims when I had begun to reply to him. Then smiling faintly, he continues:

"Tell me, I beg you, are you already sure of your victory?"

Then I say: Suppose that I am sure. Not on that account ought you to abandon your case, especially since this disputation of ours has been undertaken for the sake of giving you practice and of arousing you to cultivate the mind.

"Have I ever read the Academics?" he asks. "Or am I

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aut tot disciplinis eruditus sum, quibus tu ad me instructus adventas? Academicos, inquam, nec illi legerant a quibus primo sententia ista defensa est. Eruditio autem disciplinarumque copia si te deficit, non usque adeo tamen ingenium tuum esse debet invalidum, ut nullo facto impetu paucissimis verbis meis rogationibusque succumbas. Illud enim jam vereri coepi, ne tibi citius quam volo succedat Alypius, quo adversario non ita securus deambulabo. Ergo utinam, inquit ille, jam vincar, ut aliquando vos audiam disserentes, et quod plus est, videam; quo mihi spectaculo nihil potest felicius exhiberi. Nam quoniam placuit vobis ista fundere, potius quam effundere; siquidem ore prorumpentia stilo excipitis, nec in terram, ut dicitur, cadere sinitis; legere etiam vos licebit:¹ sed nescio quomodo, cum admoventur oculis iidem ipsi quos inter sermo caeditur;² bona disputatio si non utilius, at certe laetius perfundit animum.

18. Gratum habemus, inquam: sed repentina ista gaudia tua temere illam sententiam evadere coegerunt, qua dixisti, nullum tibi spectaculum exhiberi posse felicius. Quid si enim illum patrem tuum, quo profecto nemo philosophiam est post tam longam sitim haustus ardentius, nobiscum ista quaerentem ac disserentem videbis; cum ego me fortunatiorem nunquam putabo, quid te tandem sentire ac dicere convenit? Hic vero ille aliquantum

¹ Aliquot mss. *vobis licebit*.

² Am. Er. et Lov. *editur*. Sed mss. nullo fere excepto habent, *caeditur*. Ita etiam Bad. Phrasis a Terentio usurpata est in *Heaut.* act. 2, scen. 3: "Verum interea dum sermones caedimus."

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trained in as many branches of learning as you are provided with when you confront me?"

I reply: Those by whom that tenet was first defended, had not read the Academics. Even if you lack erudition and a wealth of preliminary instruction, your native talent should nevertheless not be so weak that—without any counter attack on your part—you would succumb to a very few words and questions from me. I had indeed begun to fear this very thing, namely, that Alypius would take your place sooner than I wish: with him as an opponent, I shall not stride along so tranquilly.

"Then, would that I were already vanquished," says he, "so that I might now hear both of you discussing the subject, or—what is even better—see you doing it. Nothing more pleasing than that spectacle could be presented to my view. Of course, since you prefer to decant your arguments rather than pour them widespread, it will be possible to read them afterwards—if indeed you snatch them with the stylus as they are bursting forth from the mouth, and do not allow them to fall to the ground, as the saying goes. But somehow or other, when our eyes are gazing at those very persons who are actually engaged in the thrust and parry of a dialogue,¹ a lively disputation perfuses the mind with greater delight, at least, if not with greater profit."

18. I say: We are grateful. But those sudden joyous transports of yours have occasioned the incautious utterance of that sentence in which you said that no more pleasing spectacle could be presented to you. Now, no one would quaff philosophy more eagerly than your own father after such a prolonged thirst. So, what if you will see him investigating those matters and discoursing on them with us? In view of the fact that I shall never consider myself more fortunate, what indeed does it behoove you to think and say?

1 Cf. Terence, *Heautontimorumenos*, 242.

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lacrymavit, et ubi loqui potuit, porrecta manu coelum suspiciens: Et quando ego, inquit, Deus, hoc videbo? sed nihil est de te desperandum. Hic cum pene omnes ab intentione disputationis remitti in lacrymas coepissemus, obluctans mecum, et vix me colligans: Age potius, inquam, et in vires tuas redi; quas ut congereres unde unde posses, patronus Academiae futurus, longe ante monueram: non opinor ideo ut modo "ante tubam tremor occupet artus";³ aut ut visendae alienae pugnae desiderio, tam cito te optes esse captivum. Hic Trygetius, ubi satis attendit jam vultus nostros serenatos: Quidni iste optet, inquit, homo tam sanctus, ut hoc ei Deus ante vota concesserit? Crede jam, Licenti; nam qui non invenis quid respondeas, et adhuc ut vincere optas, parvae fidei mihi videris. Arrisimus. Tum Licentius: Loquere beatus, inquit, non inveniendo verum, sed certe, non quaerendo.

19. Qua hilaritate adolescentulorum cum essemus laetiores; Attende, inquam, rogationem, et in viam redi firmitior et valentior, si potes. En adsum, inquit, quantum possum. Quid enim si ille fratris mei visor fama comper-

³ *Æneid.* lib. XI, v. 424.

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He now shed some tears; and when he regained his voice, he stretched out his hand, gazed upwards, and said:

"And when, O God, shall I see this? But there is nothing that we should despair of obtaining from Thee."

By this time, nearly all of us had begun to be distracted from the intended debate, and were sinking into tears. Then, hardly composing myself with a difficult struggle, I say:

Come, come, collect yourself. I had long ago admonished you, as a future defender of the Academy, to increase your strength by every means at your disposal. I do not believe that

*Fear has sapped the warrior's strength,
Before the trumpet's call.*²

Neither do I believe that you wish to be so soon a captive, just because you hope to see others fight the battle.

Trygetius, as soon as he saw that our countenances were again serene, says:

"But why should he not have hope?—such a saintly man that God has granted him his wish before he asked for it! Rather, have faith, Licentius; for, since you can find no reply to make, and are nevertheless hoping to be vanquished, you seem to me to be of little faith."

We laughed. Then Licentius retorts:

"Talk away, happy fellow—happy, however, not by finding truth, or at least not by seeking it."

19. When we had become rather joyous at the boys' hilarity, I say:

Pay attention to the question; and come back to the point with less fickleness and more energy, if you can.

"I am as attentive as I can," he says. "But as to that man who has seen my brother—what if he had learned by

² Virgil, *Aeneid*, Bk. XI, v. 424.

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tum habeat cum esse similem patris, potest insanus aut ineptus esse, si credit? Stultusne, inquam, saltem dici potest? Non continuo, inquit, nisi se id scire contenderit. Nam si ut probabile sequitur quod crebra fama jactavit, nullius temeritatis argui potest. Tum ego: Rem ipsam paulisper consideremus, et quasi ante oculos constituamus. Ecce fac illum nescio quem hominem quem describimus, esse praesentem: advenit alicunde frater tuus; ibi iste: Cujus hic puer filius? Respondetur: Cujusdam Romaniani. At hic: Quam patri similis est! quam ad me hoc non temere fama detulerat! Hic tu, vel quis alius: Nosti enim Romanianum, bone homo? Non novi, inquit: tamen similis ejus mihi videtur. Poteritne quisquam risum tenere? Nullo modo, inquit. Ergo, inquam, quid sequatur vides. Jamdudum, inquit, video. Sed tamen istam conclusionem abs te audire volo: oportet enim alere incipias, quem cepisti. Quidni, inquam, concludam? Ipsa res clamat similiter ridendos esse Academicos tuos, qui se in vita veri similitudinem sequi dicunt, cum ipsum verum quid sit, ignorent.

VIII

20. Tum Trygetius: Longe mihi, inquit, videtur dissimilis Academicorum cautio ab hujus quem descripsisti

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hearsay that he is like my father, would he be insane or silly if he believed it?"

I say: At any rate, may he not be called foolish?

"Not necessarily," he replies, "unless he maintains that he knows it. He cannot be accused of rashness if he follows as something probable that which an extensive rumor has spread."

Then I say: Let us consider this matter for a moment: let us place it, as it were, before our eyes. For instance, suppose that this some one or other whom we are describing, be here with us now. Your brother arrives from somewhere; and this other man asks: "Whose son is this boy?" He receives this answer: "He is the son of a certain Romanianus." And straightway he exclaims: "How closely he resembles his father! How accurately had rumor made this fact known to me!" And if you or some one else would then ask: "My good man, do you know Romanianus?" And if he would reply: "No, I do not know him; but to me, this man seems exactly like him." Could anyone refrain from laughter?

"Certainly not," he replies.

I say: Therefore, you see what follows.

"I have been seeing it all along," he replies. "Nevertheless, I am anxious to hear that conclusion from you; for you ought to begin to foster the child you have adopted."

I say: Why should I not draw a conclusion? The example itself proclaims that the Academics are to be likewise laughed at; for they assert that in life they are following what resembles the true, although they do not know what truth itself is.

CHAPTER VIII

20. Trygetius now says: "To me, the precaution of the Academics seems very different to the silliness of the man

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ineptia. Illi enim rationibus assequuntur quod dicunt esse verisimile: iste autem ineptus famam secutus est, cujus auctoritate nihil est vilius. Quasi vero, inquam, non ineptior esset, si diceret, Patrem quidem ejus minime novi, nec fama comperi quam sit similis patris, et mihi tamen similis videtur. Ineptior certe, inquit. Sed quorsum ista? Quia tales, inquam sunt, qui dicunt, Verum quidem non novimus; sed hoc quod videmus, ejus quod non novimus simile est. Probabile, inquit, illi dicunt. Cui ego: Quomodo istuc dicis? An negas eos verisimile dicere? Et ille inquit: Ego ob hoc dicere volui, ut illam similitudinem excluderem. Videbatur enim mihi fama improbe irruisse in quaestionem vestram, cum Academici ne oculis quidem credant humanis, nedum famae mille quidem, ut poetae fingunt, sed monstrosis tamen luminibus. Nam quis ego tandem sum Academiae defensor? An in quaestione ista invidetis securitati meae? En habes Alypium, cujus adventus nobis, quaeso, ferias dederit, quem te jamdudum non frustra formidare arbitramur.

21. Tum facto silentio, oculos ambo in Alypium contulerunt. Tum ille: Vellem, inquit, quidem, ut meae vires patiuntur, auxiliari aliquatenus partibus vestris, nisi mihi omen vestrum terrori esset. Sed hanc formidinem, ni me spes fefellerit, facile fugem.¹ Simul enim solatur me, quod praesens Academicorum oppugnator, onus Trygetii victi

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you have described.¹ By methods of reasoning, they reach what they call the truth-like; but that half-wit followed rumor, whose authority is of the least possible value."

I say: Just as though he would not be more witless if he were to say: "I do not know his father at all, nor have I learned from rumor how much this boy resembles his father. Nevertheless, I think he resembles him."

"More witless, certainly," he replies. "But what of that?"

I say: Of the same character are those who say: "As a matter of fact, we do not know truth; but the thing we see, is just like a thing we do not know."

"They call it probable," he says.

I ask him: Just why do you say that? Do you deny that they call it *truth-like*?

And he replies: "I wished to say it for precisely this reason: to eliminate that *likeness*. It seemed to me that rumor had brazenly rushed into the question; for the Academics do not believe even human eyes: still less do they believe the thousand—but monstrous—eyes of rumor, as poets portray.² And at any rate, what kind of defender of the Academy am I? Or do you envy my secureness in this question? Behold! you have Alypius, whose arrival will, I beg you, afford us respite, and whom you have, we believe, been soundly fearing for a long time."

21. And in the silence that followed, both of them directed their gaze towards Alypius, who then says:

"If your omen were not for me an occasion of fear, I should indeed be willing to render—to the best of my ability—at least some assistance to your side. However, if hope does not deceive me, I should be able to banish that fear rather easily; for I am at the same time encouraged by the fact that the present assailant of the Academics will

¹ Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xi, 35.

² Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, Bk. IV, v. 181 ff.

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pene subierit, et nunc eum victorem vestra confessione probabile est. Illud magis vereor, ne et deserti officii negligentiam, et invasi impudentiam, devitare non possim. Non enim vos oblitos credo, iudicis mihi munus fuisse delatum. Hic Trygetius: Illud, inquit, aliud, hoc autem aliud est; quare quaesumus, ut te aliquando patiari privatum. Ne renuerim, ait; ne dum impudentiam vel negligentiam vitare cupio, in superbiae, quo vitio nihil est immanius, laqueos incidam, si honorem mihi a vobis concessum, diutius quam permittitis, teneam.

1 In hactenus vulgatis, *facile fugiam*.

IX

22. Proinde velim mihi exponas, bone accusator Academicorum, officium tuum; id est, in quorum defensionem hos oppugnes. Metuo enim, ne Academicos refellens, Academicum te probare velis. Accusatorum, inquam, ut opinor, duo genera esse bene nosti: non enim si a Cicerone modestissime dictum est, ita eum Verris esse accusatorem, ut Siculorum defensor esset,¹ propterea necesse est, eum qui aliquem accusat, habere alterum quem defendat. Et ille: Saltem habesne tu quidquam in quo sententia tua jam fundata constiterit? Facile est, inquam, huic rogationi re-

1 Cicero *in Verrem*, actione I.

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have almost taken on himself the onus of the vanquished Trygetius, and that now—as you admit—it is probable that he will be the victor. And yet, I have a more appalling fear lest I be unable to escape both the reproach of having abandoned an office and the effrontery of usurping one; for I am sure that you have not forgotten the fact that the office of judge had been conferred on me.”

“That office is one thing, but this is something else,” says Trygetius. “Therefore, we beg you to acquiesce in your being without office for a moment.”

“Even if I were averse to that,” says Alypius, “and even if I were not anxious to avoid not only effrontery but negligence also, I should nevertheless fall into the snares of pride—and nothing is more loathsome than that vice—if I should continue, any longer than you permit it, to hold the honor that you have bestowed upon me.

CHAPTER IX

22. “So, my dear prosecutor of the Academics, I should like you to disclose your official position to me. In other words, in whose defense do you attack them? For I fear that, while refuting the Academics, you may wish to prove that you are an Academic.”

I say: You are well aware, I believe, that there are two kinds of prosecutors; for—even though Cicero very modestly said that he was a prosecutor of Verres in such manner that he was really a defender of the Sicilians¹—it is not necessary that whoever prosecutes some one, should be defending some one else.

“Have you not,” he asks, “at least some definite point on which your opinion rests?”

I reply: This question is easily answered, especially by

¹ *In Verrem*, II, iv, 82.

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spondere, mihi praesertim cui repentina non est: jam hoc totum mecum egi, et diu multumque versavi animo. Quamobrem audi, Alypi, quod, ut arbitror, jam optime scis: non ego istam disputationem disputandi gratia susceptam volo; satis sit quod cum istis adolescentibus praelusimus, ubi libenter nobiscum philosophia quasi jocata est. Quare auferantur de manibus nostris fabellae pueriles. De vita nostra, de moribus, de animo res agitur; qui se superaturum inimicitias omnium fallaciarum, et veritate comprehensa, quasi in regionem suae originis rediens, triumphaturum de libidinibus, atque ita temperantia velut conjuge accepta regnaturum esse praesumit, securior rediturus in coelum.² Vides quid dicam? Tollamus de medio jam cuncta ista: "arma acri facienda viro";³ nec quidquam minus semper optavi, quam inter eos, qui secum multum vixerunt, multumque sermocinati sunt, oriri aliquid, unde novus quasi conflictus exsurgat. Sed propter memoriam, quae infida custos est excogitatorum, referri in litteras volui, quod inter nos saepe pertractavimus, simul ut isti adolescentes, et in haec attendere discerent, et aggredi ac subire tentarent.

23. Tune ergo nescis, nihil me certum adhuc habere quod sentiam, sed ab eo quaerendo Academicorum argumentis atque disputationibus impediri? Nescio enim quo-

2 *Retract.* lib. I, cap. I, n. 3.

3 *Aeneid.* lib. VIII, v. 441.

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me; for it is not a sudden one. I have already canvassed all this with myself, and have pondered it deeply for a long time. Wherefore, Alypius, now hear what, I believe, you know very well already; namely, that I do not wish this disputation to be undertaken just for the sake of debating. Let us put an end to our prelude with those boys, wherein philosophy herself, as it were, joyfully joined in our jesting. Therefore, let those childish tales be placed beyond our reach. The present question concerns our life, our morals, and the soul, which—destined to return to heaven² when rendered more secure, now returning, as it were, to the region of its origin—presumes that it will overcome the opposition of all deceptive appearances; that, when it will have comprehended the truth, it will subdue inordinate desires; and that, when it will have thus become wedded, as it were, to temperance, it will exercise sovereign power.³ Do you understand what I am saying? Let us at once fling those trifles away from us: "*For an eager warrior, weapons must be forged.*"⁴ Never have I had less desire for anything than for the occurrence of something that would occasion any kind of conflict among those who have lived with me so long and have engaged in frequent discussions with me. Nevertheless, because memory is an unreliable custodian of our reasonings, I was anxious to have our frequent disputations committed to writing, so that those boys might learn to apply their minds to those questions and might attempt to attack and pursue them.

23. And do you not know that as yet I have nothing which I can regard as certain, but that on account of the arguments and disputations of the Academics I am hindered from searching for it?⁵ Somehow or other, they

2 Cf. *Retract.* I, i, 3.

3 Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, IV, viii, 3.

4 Virgil, *Aeneid*, Bk. VIII, v. 441.

5 Note 10, page 256.

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modo fecerunt in animo quamdam probabilitatem (ut ab eorum verbo nondum recedam), quod homo verum invenire non possit: unde piger et prorsus segnis effectus eram, nec quaerere audebam, quod acutissimis ac doctissimis viris invenire non licuit. Nisi ergo prius tam mihi persuasero verum posse inveniri, quam sibi illi non posse persuaserunt; non audebo quaerere, nec habeo aliquid quod defendam. Itaque istam interrogationem remove, si placet, et potius discutiamus inter nos, quam sagaciter possumus, utrumnam possit verum inveniri. Et pro parte mea videor mihi habere jam multa, quibus contra rationem Academicorum niti molior: inter quos et me modo interim nihil distat, nisi quod illis probabile visum est, non posse inveniri veritatem; mihi autem inveniri posse probabile est. Nam ignoratio veri, aut mihi, si illi fingeant, peculiaris est, aut certe utrisque communis.

X

24. Tum Alypius: Jam, inquit, securus incedam: video enim te non tam accusatorem, quam adiutorem fore. Itaque ne longius abeamus, videamus quaeso prius ne per hanc quaestionem in qua successisse videor iis qui tibi cesserunt, in verbi controversiam decidamus, quod te ipso insinuante ex auctoritate illa Tulliana turpissimum esse, saepe confessi sumus. Cum enim, ni fallor, Licentius placuisse sibi diceret de probabilitate Academicorum sententiam, subiecisti quod ille haud dubie confirmavit, sciretne

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have elaborated in my mind some kind of probability—to use their own term—that man is unable to find truth. Consequently, I had become lazy and utterly indolent; for I had not the courage to make a search for that which the most ingenious and learned men were unable to find. So, unless I first become just as convinced that truth can be found, as they are convinced that it cannot, I shall not dare to make the search. And in that case, I have nothing to defend. Therefore, please withdraw that question. Rather, let us discuss between ourselves—and as wisely as we can—the question as to whether truth can be discovered. And I think that I have on my side many arguments on which I am trying to rely in my opposition to the theory of the Academics. Meanwhile, the only difference between them and me consists in the fact that to them it seemed probable that the truth could not be found, whilst to me it is probable that it can be found. If they are only pretending, then ignorance of truth is peculiar to me; otherwise, it is common at least to them and to me.

CHAPTER X

24. Alypius then says: “Now I shall proceed without fear, because I see that you will be a co-operator rather than an opponent. First of all, I earnestly entreat that we be on our guard, lest from this question—in which I seem to have taken the place of those who have yielded to you—we lapse into a mere verbal controversy; for, on your own intimations from the authority of Tullius, we have often admitted that such a controversy is most unseemly.¹ And yet, if I am not mistaken, when Licentius said that he approved the Academics’ theory on probability, you at once asked him another question, to which he gave an affirma-

1 Cf. *De oratore*, I, xi, 47.

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hanc ab eisdem etiam verisimilitudinem nominari. Et bene novi, siquidem ex te mihi nota sunt, non absque te esse Academicorum placita. Quae cum, ut dixi, animo tuo infixae sint; quid¹ verba secteris, ignoro. Non est ista, inquam, mihi crede, verborum, sed rerum ipsarum magna controversia: non enim illos viros eos fuisse arbitror, qui rebus nescirent nomina imponere; sed mihi haec vocabula videntur elegisse, et ad occultandam tardioribus, et ad significandam vigilantioribus sententiam suam. Quod quare et quomodo mihi videatur, exponam, cum prius illa discussero, quae ab eis tanquam cognitionis humanae inimicis dicta homines putant. Itaque perlibenter habeo hucusque hodie nostrum processisse sermonem, ut satis quid inter nos quaereretur, aperteque constaret. Nam illi mihi videntur graves omnino ac prudentes viri fuisse. Si quid est autem, quod nunc disputabimus adversus eos erit,² qui Academicos inventioni veritatis adversos fuisse crediderunt. Et ne me territum putes, etiam contra eos ipsos non invitatus armabor, si non occultandae sententiae suae causa, ne ab eis temere pollutis mentibus, et quasi profanis, quaedam veritatis sacra proderentur; sed ex animo illa quae in eorum libris legimus, defenderunt. Quod hodie facerem, nisi nos solis occasus jam domum redire compelleret. Hactenus illo die disputatum est.

1 Par. Er. Ven. *quae*.

2 Par. *Siquidem quod disputabimus, contra eos disputabimus, qui.*

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tive answer: you asked him if he knew that by the Academics this same probability was called *truth-likeness*. And just as it is from you that I have learned the tenets of the Academics, so I know that were it not for you, I would not know them. So, I know not why you are carping at words when, as I have said, those tenets are firmly fixed in your mind."

I say: Believe me, this important controversy is not one of mere words: it deals with realities. Certainly, I do not think that the Academics were men who did not know how to designate things by their correct names. Rather, it seems to me that they chose those names for the twofold purpose of concealing their theory from sluggish minds and of revealing it to the keen-minded.² I shall explain how and why I have come to believe this; but I shall first discuss the arguments that are commonly believed to have been advanced by those men, as foes of human knowledge. Therefore, I am very glad that today our discussion has advanced so far that the question between us is now sufficiently definite and manifest. Truly, it seems to me that those men were absolutely serious and circumspect. Accordingly, if there is anything that we shall now discuss, it will be against those who believed that the Academics were opponents to the finding of the truth. And do not think that I am afraid; for I shall willingly take up arms against the Academics themselves if they earnestly maintained the tenets which we read in their writings—that is, if they expounded those theories, not to conceal their doctrine, but so that certain mysteries of the truth would not be rashly divulged to men of polluted and profane minds, so to speak. I should do it today, if the setting sun were not now compelling us to return to the house. To this point only, the discussion proceeded on that day.

2 "Therefore, I wish to see what they have discovered. 'We do not,' says he, 'usually reveal that.'" Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xviii, 60.

XI

25. Postridie autem quamvis non minus blandus tranquillisque dies illuxisset, vix tamen domesticis negotiis evoluti sumus. Nam magnam ejus partem in epistolarum maxime descriptione consumpseramus. Et cum jam duae horae vix reliquae forent, ad pratum processimus. Nam invitabat coeli nimia serenitas, placuitque, ut ne ipsum quidem quod restiterat tempus, perire pateremur. Itaque cum ad arborem solitam ventum esset, et mansissemus loco: Velim vos, inquam, adolescentuli, quoniam non est hodie magna res aggredienda, in memoriam mihi revocetis, quomodo hesterno die rogatiunculae quae vos turbavit, Alypius responderit. Hic Licentius: Tam breve est, inquit, ut nihil negotii sit hoc recordari; quam leve sit autem tu videris. Nam, ut opinor, vetuit te, res cum constaret, de verbis movere quaestionem. Et ego: Hoc ipsum, inquam, quid sit, quamve habeat vim, satis animadvertistis? Videor, inquit, mihi videre quid sit; sed quaeso, tu id paulisper exponas. Nam saepe abs te audiivi, turpe esse disputantibus in verborum quaestione immorari, cum certamen nullum de rebus remanserit. Sed hoc subtilius est, quam ut explicandum a me debeat flagitari.

26. Audite ergo, inquam, quid sit, vos. Id probabile vel verisimile Academici vocant, quod nos ad agendum sine assensione potest invitare. Sine assensione autem dico,

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CHAPTER XI

25. Although the following day¹ was no less enticing and tranquil, we were nevertheless hardly disengaged from domestic occupations; for we had spent a great part of it especially in the writing of letters. Yet, although there were scarcely two hours remaining, we went to the meadow; for the extreme serenity of the heavens was inviting us, and we decided not to suffer the loss of even the little time that remained. And when we had arrived at our accustomed place beside the tree, and had stopped there, I say:

Young men, since we cannot attack any matter of great importance today, I wish you would refresh my memory as to the manner in which Alypius yesterday answered the trifling question that had upset you.

Licentius says: "It is so brief that there is no trouble in remembering it; but as to how trifling it is—that is for you to see. At any rate, I think it stopped you from raising a question about words, when the substance of the matter was clear and certain."

I say: Have both of you attentively noted that point, what it is, and what it implies?

He answers: "I think I see what it is. But please explain it briefly; for I have often heard from you that it is shameful for disputants to linger on a question of mere words, whenever there remains no controversy as to the realities. This question, however, is so subtle that an explanation of it cannot rightly be demanded of me."

26. I say: Let both of you hear what it is. *Probable* or *truth-like* is the term which the Academics employ to designate whatever can incite us to act, without our accepting

¹ November 20, 386. See note 8, page 252.

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Ut id quod agimus non opinemur verum esse, aut non id scire arbitremur; agamus tamen. Ut verbi causa, utrum hesterna nocte tam liquida ac pura, hodie tam laetus sol exorturus esset, si nos quispiam rogaret; credo quod nos id scire negaremus, diceremus tamen ita videri. Talia, inquit Academicus, mihi videntur omnia quae probabilia vel verisimilia putavi nominanda; quae tu si alio nomine vis vocare, nihil repugno. Satis enim mihi est, te jam bene accepisse quid dicam, id est quibus rebus haec nomina imponam. Non enim vocabulorum opificem, sed rerum inquisitorem decet esse sapientem. Satisne intellexistis, quomodo mihi ludicra illa quibus vos agitabam, de manibus excussa sint? Hic cum ambo se intellexisse respondissent, vultuque ipso responsionem postularent meam: Quid putatis, inquam? Ciceronem cujus haec verba sunt, inopem fuisse latinae linguae, ut minus apta rebus imponeret, quas sentiebat, nomina?

XII

27. Tum Trygetius: Jam, inquit, placet nobis, cum res nota sit, de verbis nullas calumnias commovere. Quare vide potius quid huic respondeas qui nos liberavit, in quos tu impulsus tentas iterum irruere. Et Licentius: Mane, ait, quaeso: nam mihi subluceat nescio quid, quo videam non

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it as true.² I employ the phrase, "without our accepting it as true," inasmuch as we do not suppose that what we are doing, is true; but we do it, nevertheless. For example, last night when the sky was so bright and clear, if some one had asked us whether such a joyous sun would rise today, I think we should have replied that we did not know, but that it seemed so. The Academic says: "Of this character, it seems to me, are all the things which I think ought to be called probable or truth-like. But if you wish to designate them by another name, I have no objection. For me it is sufficient that you understand what I am saying, namely, that you know to what things those names are to be attached; for it behooves a wise man to be a searcher for reality, not a deviser of words."³ Now, have both of you sufficiently understood how those toys with which I have been arousing your interest, have been stricken from my hands? Now, when both of them had replied that they understood, and were showing by their very countenances that they were desirous of a response from me, I ask: What do you think? Do you think that Cicero—and those words are his—had such a scanty knowledge of the Latin language that he would give inappropriate names to the things he was treating of?

2 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, x, 32; *ibid.*, xxxi, 99.

3 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, frag. 19, Müller.

CHAPTER XII

27. Then Trygetius says: "Since the matter itself is clear, we prefer not to quibble with regard to words. So, concern yourself rather with finding an answer to make to him who has relieved us, against whom you are aroused and upon whom you are attempting to rush again."

Then Licentius says: "Wait a moment, please. For I have a glimmer of something or other by which I see that

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tibi tam facile tantum argumentum eripi debuisse. Et cum defixus in cogitatione siluisset aliquantum: Rogo, inquit, nihil mihi videtur esse absurdius, quam dicere, se verisimile sequi, eum qui verum quid sit ignoret: nec illa me tua similitudo conturbat. Nam recte ego interrogatus, utrum ex ista temperie coeli nulla in crastinum pluvia cogatur, respondeo esse verisimile, qui me non nego nosse aliquid veri. Nam scio arborem istam modo argenteam fieri non posse; multaque talia vera non impudenter me scire dico, quorum video esse similia ea quae verisimilia nomino. Tu vero, Carneades, vel quae alia graeca pestis, ut nostris parcam: (quid enim dubitem in hanc partem transire ad eum cui captivus debeor jure victoriae?) tu ergo cum te nihil veri scire dicas, unde hoc verisimile sequeris? At enim nomen ei non potui aliud imponere. Quid ergo nobis disputandum est cum eo, qui nec loqui potest?

28. Non ego, inquit Alypius, perfugas metuum: quanto minus ille Carneades, in quem nescio utrum juvenili an puerili levitate commotus, maledicta potius quam aliquod telum putasti esse jaciendum? Nam illi quidem ad roborandam sententiam suam, quae semper tenuis probabilis¹ fundata fuit, hoc interim adversum te facile suffecerit, ita nos a veri inventione procul esse positos, ut tu tibi ipse magno argumento esse possis, qui ita una interrogatiuncula loco motus es, ut ubi tibi standum esset, penitus ignorares. Sed haec, atque scientiam tuam, quam tibi impressam de hac arbore paulo ante confessus es, in aliud tempus differamus.

1 Par. Er. Ven. *Saeptenus probabilis ratione.*

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such a strong argument ought not to be so quickly snatched away from you." And having remained fixed in thought for some time, he resumes: "By your leave, I think that nothing is more absurd than that a man should say that he does not know what truth is, but that he is following what is like truth. However, that similitude of yours does not disconcert me; for if I, who do not deny that I know some truth, were asked whether no rain for tomorrow is being condensed from the atmosphere in its present condition, I should rightly answer that it is like truth [likely]. For I know that this tree cannot just now become silvery; and with all due modesty, I say that I know many truths of this kind. And I see a similarity between them and the things I call truth-like. But you, Carneades or any other Greek pest, to say nothing about our own compatriots—why indeed should I hesitate to change sides, and to go on the side of him to whom I belong by right of victory?—since you say that you have knowledge of no truth, how can you say you are following this truth-like thing? For, at any rate, I cannot give it another name. But then, why should we dispute with a man who does not even know how to talk?"

28. "Deserters will never frighten me," says Alypius. "How much less will they frighten that Carneades, against whom you—impelled by boyish or childish levity, I know not which—believed that invectives rather than a spear should be hurled? However, for corroborating his theory—which was always based on something at least probable—this will easily suffice for him against you, namely, the fact that we are so remote from the finding of truth that you can be a great argument against yourself; for, by one little question you have been so shaken from your position that you have not the faintest notion as to where you ought to stand. But let us postpone those matters, and also that knowledge of yours which, a little while ago, you claimed

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Quamvis enim jam alias partes delegeris, tamen sedulo docendus es quid paulo ante dixerim. Nondum enim, ut opinor, in eam quaestionem, qua utrum inveniri verum possit quaeritur, progressi fuimus: sed illud tantum in ipso vestibulo defensionis meae praescribendum putavi, in quo te lassum prostratumque prospexeram; hoc est; utrum verisimile, an probabile, an alio si quo nomine appellari potest, quod sibi Academici sat esse dicant, quaerendum non esse. Nam si tu optimus jam inventor veritatis tibi videris, nihil ad me. Postea si ingratus non fueris huic patrocinio meo, eadem fortasse me docebis.

XIII

29. Hic ego, cum verecunde Licentius Alypii impetum formidaret; Omnia potius, inquam, Alypi, loqui maluisti, quam quemadmodum nobis cum iis, qui loqui nesciant, disputandum sit. Et ille: Quoniam olim tum mihi, tum omnibus notum est, et nunc tua professione satis indicas te loquendi peritum esse; velim explices utilitatem primo hujus inquisitionis suae,² quae aut superflua est, ut opinor, et ei multo magis respondere superfluum est; aut si comoda visa fuerit, et a me explicari nequierit, precario abs te impetrem, ut magistri officium ne gravare. Meministi, inquam, heri me esse pollicitum de istis vocabulis post acturum. Et nunc ille sol admonet, ut quae ludicra pueris proposui, redigam in cistas; praesertim cum ea ornandi jam potius quam vendendi gratia proponam. Nunc ante-

2 Bad. Er. et Lov. *inquisitionis tuae*.

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to be imprinted on you with regard to this tree. Despite the fact that you have chosen another rôle, you must nevertheless be carefully taught what I voiced a short while ago; for we had not yet, I believe, reached the question as to whether truth can be discovered. But at the very threshold of my defense—where I found you weary and prostrate—I prescribed that the question be limited to this point: whether a search ought not to be made for that which the Academics claim to be sufficient for them, namely, truth-likeness, or probability, or whatever else it may be called. But if you consider yourself a very proficient truth-finder, that is of no concern to me. If you are not ungrateful for my pleading in your defense, you will perhaps teach me those same things later.”

CHAPTER XIII

29. Because Licentius was now shamefacedly wilting before this attack of Alypius, I say: Alypius, you have preferred to say everything rather than how we are to dispute with those who know not how to talk.

Alypius says: “Your rhetorical skill has long been well known to me and to everybody else. Your present profession evinces the fact that you still possess that skill. Therefore, I wish you would first explain the purport of the question asked by Licentius. If his question is to no purpose—and I think it is purposeless—then an answer to it would be even more senseless. But if it should seem to you to be an apt question, and one which cannot be unraveled by me, then let me by earnest request prevail on you to accept the rôle of teacher.”

I say: You remember that yesterday I promised to treat of those words later. And now that sun in the heavens is admonishing me to replace in the bag the playthings which I displayed to the boys—all the more so, because I am dis-

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quam stilum nostrum tenebrae occupent, quae patronae Academicorum solent esse, volo inter nos hodie plenissime constet, ad quam quaestionem nobis explicandam mane surgendum sit. Itaque responde, quaeso, utrum tibi videantur Academici habuisse certam de veritate sententiam, et eam temere ignotis vel non purgatis animis prodere noluisse; an vero ita senserint, ut eorum disputationes se habent.

30. Tum ille: Quid illis animi fuerit, inquit, non temere confirmabo. Nam quantum ex libris colligi datur, tu melius nosti quae in verba sententiam suam promere soleant: Me autem de meipso si consulis, inventum nondum verum esse puto. Addo etiam quod de Academicis flagitabas, nec posse inveniri me putare, non solum inolita, quam semper fere animadvertisti opinione mea, sed etiam auctoritate magnorum excellentiorumque philosophorum; quibus nos praebere colla sive imbecillitas nostra, sive sagacitas ipsorum, ultra quam nihil jam inveniri posse credendum est, nescio quomodo compellit. Hoc est, inquam, quod volui. Nam verebar, ne cum tibi quoque id videretur quod mihi; disputatio nostra manca remaneret, nullo existente qui ex altera parte rem venire in manus cogeret, ut diligenter quantum possumus versaretur. Itaque si id evenisset, paratus eram te rogare, ut Academicorum partes ita susciperes, quasi tibi non solum disputasse, sed etiam sensisse viderentur, verum non posse comprehendere. Quaeritur ergo inter nos, utrum illorum argumentis probabile

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playing them as ornaments rather than as merchandise. But—before darkness, the usual protectress of the Academics, descends upon our pen—I desire unanimous agreement as to the question we should take up for explanation in the morning. Accordingly, I ask you to please answer this question: Do you believe that the Academics held a definite theory on the truth, a theory which they wished to keep concealed from ignoble or unpurified minds; or rather that their convictions on the matter were just the same as their disputations read?¹

Alypius answers: "I shall not rashly affirm what it is that they had in their minds; for, insofar as it can be gathered from their writings, you are better informed as to how they used to express their theory. But if you are asking me about my own views, I believe that truth has not been discovered. I also add—what you were asking with regard to the Academics—that I think it cannot be found. I so think, not only by my own ingrained opinion—which you have nearly always censured—but also by reason of the authority of great and pre-eminent philosophers, to whom either our own incompetence or their sagacity somehow or other compels us to bow our heads; and we must believe that nothing higher than that authority can be found."

I say: That is what I wanted; for I feared that, while you and I were holding the same views on the question, our debate would remain incomplete, since there would be nobody on the other side to contest our position, so that it would be thrashed out to the best of our ability. Consequently, if that had happened, I was going to ask you to defend the Academics' position, just as if you thought that they not only contended that truth could not be understood, but that they really felt that it could not. So now, the question between us is this: Whether, by virtue of their

1 "Why do you conceal your theory, like something shameful?" Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xviii, 60.

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sit nihil percipi posse, ac nulli rei esse assentiendum. Quod si obtinueris, cedam libenter: si autem demonstrare potuero multo esse probabilius, et posse ad veritatem pervenire sapientem, et assensionem non semper esse cohibendam; nihil habebis, ut opinor, cur non te in meam sententiam transire patiaris. Quod cum illi placuisset et caeteris qui aderant, jam vespere obumbrati domum revertimus.

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arguments, it is probable that nothing can be perceived, and that assent should be given to nothing. If you carry this point, I shall gladly yield to you. But if I am able to prove it to be far more probable that a wise man can reach the truth, and that assent is not always to be withheld, then you, I believe, will have no reason for refusing to change over to my opinion. When he and the others had agreed on this, and the shades of evening had already covered us, we returned to the house.

BOOK III

LIBER TERTIUS

CAPUT I

1. Cum post illum sermonem quem secundus liber continet, alio die consedissemus in balneis; nam erat tristior quam ut ad pratum liberet descendere; sic exorsus sum: Arbitror vos jam satis animadvertisse qua de re inter nos discutienda quaestio constituta sit. Sed antequam ad partes meas veniam; quae ad eam pertinent explicandam, pauca, quaeso, de spe, de vita, de instituto nostro non ab re abhorrentia libenter audiat. Negotium nostrum non leve aut superfluum, sed necessarium ac summum esse arbitror, magnopere quaerere veritatem: hoc inter me atque Alypium convenit. Nam et caeteri philosophi sapientem suum eam invenisse putaverunt; et Academici sapienti suo summo conatu inveniendam¹ esse professi sunt, idque illum agere sedulo; sed quoniam vel lateret obruta, vel confusa non emeretur, ad agendam vitam id eum sequi quod probabile ac verisimile occurreret. Id etiam vestra pristina disceptatione confectum est. Nam cum alter inventa veritate beatum fieri asseruerit hominem, alter vero tantum diligenter quaesita; nulli nostrum dubium est, nihil esse a nobis huic negotio praeponendum. Quamobrem qualem vobis, quaeso, hesternum diem videmur duxisse? Vobis

1 Forte, *inquirendam*.

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

1. On the next day¹ after the discourse which the second book contains, when we had assembled in the bathing hall—for the weather was too inclement to invite us to the lawn—I opened the discussion in this way:

I believe that you have clearly noted the subject that we have mutually agreed on for today's discussion. But before I come to my particular assignment, which is that of elucidating the question, listen willingly, I beg you, to a few observations that are not inappropriate to the subject—observations on hope, on life, and on our plan of life. I believe that a thorough search for the truth is neither a trifling nor a needless occupation for us, but rather a necessary and important one. On this point, there is complete agreement between Alypius and me; for, with the exception of the Academics, all the philosophers believed that their own respective wise men had already found it. And even the Academics proclaimed that it is to be found by their wise man through a supreme effort; that he is zealously making such effort; but that in practical affairs—because the truth is either completely hidden beneath the surface, or indistinguishably confused—he is following what presents itself as probable or truth-like. But all of this was settled in your initial discussion; for, although one of you maintained that a man becomes happy by finding the truth, and the other claimed that he becomes happy by a mere diligent search for it, yet none of us has any doubt as to the fact that we must deem nothing more desirable than this occupation. Wherefore, I ask, what kind of day

¹ November 21, 386. See note 8, page 252.

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quidem in studiis vestris vivere licuit. Nam et tu, Trygeti, Virgilii te carminibus oblectasti, et Licentius fingendis verbis vacavit, quorum amore ita peculsus est, ut propter eum maxime mihi istum sermonem inferendum putarem, quo in ejus animo philosophia (nunc enim tempus est) majorem partem, non modo quam poetica, sed quaevis alia disciplina sibi usurpet, ac vindicet.

II

2. Sed quaeso vos, nonne miserti¹ nostri estis, cum pridie ita cubitum issemus, ut ad dilatam quaestionem, et prorsus ad nihil aliud surgeretur; quod tanta de re familiari necessario peragenda exstiterunt, ut his penitus occupati, vix duas extremas dici horas in nosmetipsos respirare possemus? Quare semper fuit sententia mea, sapienti jam homini nihil opus esse; ut autem sapiens fiat, plurimum necessariam esse fortunam:² nisi quid aliud videtur Alympio. Tum ille: quantum juris, inquit, fortunae tribuas, nondum bene novi. Nam si ad contemnendam fortunam, fortuna ipsa opus esse arbitraris, me quoque comitem in hanc sententiam do tibi. Sin fortunae nihil aliud concedis, quam ea quae corporis necessitati non possunt, nisi ipsa volente, suppetere; non ita sentio. Aut enim licet eadem repugnante atque invita, nondum sapienti, cupido tamen sapientiae ea sumere quae vitae necessaria confitemur; aut conceden-

1 In P. B. *miserati*.

2 *Retract.*, lib. I, cap. I, n. 1.

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do you think we spent yesterday? Both of you were free to follow your inclinations; and you, Trygetius, reveled in the poems of Virgil, and Licentius had leisure for composing verses. So smitten is he with love for poetry, that it was especially on his account I thought it advisable to bring up this discussion, so that philosophy—and now is the time for it—might gain and retain a larger share of his affection than poetics or any other branch of learning.

CHAPTER II

2. But, I ask you, have you had no pity on us? On the previous evening, we had so arranged matters before retiring to sleep, that we should, on arising, occupy ourselves with absolutely nothing but the question that had been postponed. Yet, so many domestic affairs demanded immediate attention that, wholly occupied with them, we had scarcely the last two hours of the day in which to breathe freely. But after all, it has always been my opinion that nothing is needful for a man who is already wise, but that fortune is most needful for a man to become wise.¹ But perhaps Alypius holds a different opinion.

Then Alypius says: "As yet, I am not sure how much prerogative you attribute to fortune. But if you think that fortune is necessary in order to condemn fortune herself, then I join you in that opinion. If, however, you are assigning to fortune nothing else than the things which cannot suffice for the needs of the body unless fortune be propitious, then I do not agree with you; for, even though fortune be unpropitious or adverse, a man—although he be not yet wise, but desirous of wisdom—may nevertheless make use of the things which we confess to be necessary for the body. Otherwise, we must admit that fortune dominates

¹ Cf. *Retract.*, I, i, 1. Cf. Cicero, *De fin.*, I, xix, 63.

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dum est etiam in omni sapientis vita eam dominari, cum et ipse sapiens iis quae corpori necessaria sunt, non indigere non possit.

3. Dicis ergo, inquam, fortunam esse necessariam studioso sapientiae, sapienti vero negas. Non ab re est eadem repetere, inquit. Itaque nunc etiam abs te quaero, utrum fortunam ad seipsam contemnendam aliquid juvare aestimes. Quod si arbitraris, dico sapientiae cupidum magnopere indigere fortuna. Arbitror, inquam, siquidem per illam erit talis, qualis eam possit contemnere. Nec absurdum est: nam sic etiam parvis nobis ubera necessaria sunt, quibus efficitur, ut sine his postea vivere, ac valere possimus. Sententias, ait, nostras si animi conceptio non dissonat, concordare mihi liquet: nisi forte discernendum cuiquam videtur quod vel fortunae vel uberum, non ipsa ubera seu fortuna, sed alia res quaedam nos faciat contemptores. Nihil magnum est, inquam, alio simili uti. Nam ut sine navi, vel quolibet vehiculo, aut omnino, ne vel ipsum Daedalum timeam, sine ullis ad hanc rem accommodatis instrumentis, aut aliqua occultiore potentia, Ægeum mare nemo transmittit; quamvis nihil aliud, quam pervenire proponat; quod cum ei evenerit, illa omnia quibus advectus est, paratus sit abjicere atque contemnere: ita quisquis ad sapientiae portum, et quasi firmissimum et quietissimum solum pervenire voluerit; quoniam, ut alia omittam, si caecus ac surdus fuerit, non potest, quod

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the entire life of a wise man, since even a wise man cannot help but need the things that are necessary for the body."

3. I say: Therefore, you say that fortune is necessary for a man who is desirous of wisdom, but not for a man who is already wise.

He answers: "It is not pointless to repeat what has been already said. Accordingly, I now also ask you: Do you think that fortune is of any aid towards the contemning of herself? If you think so, then I say that fortune is very necessary for a man who is desirous of wisdom."

I say: Yes, I do think so; for it is through the aid of fortune that he will be the kind of man who will be able to condemn her. This is not absurd; for when we were babes, we had need of woman's breasts, through which it is brought about that afterwards we are able to live and grow strong without them.

He says: "It is clear to me that our opinions are in harmony, unless our expression of them is faulty; that is, unless perhaps it must be made clear to everyone that a certain something else—and not fortune or the breasts—makes us contemners of fortune and the breasts."

I say: It is not hard to find another analogy. For instance, no one crosses the Aegean Sea without a ship or some other means of transport, or—so that I may not fear even Daedalus²—without any suitable equipment or some kind of occult power. Yet, when he has crossed over—provided, of course, that he have no other purpose than to reach the shore—he is ready to throw away and to condemn all the means by which he was borne. I believe that, in like manner, fortune is necessary for any man who wishes to reach the port of wisdom and, as it were, the most steadfast and pleasant country; for, to say nothing about other defects, if a man happens to be blind and deaf—and that is some-

2 Daedalus supplied himself with artificial wings.

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positum est in potestate fortunae; necessariam mihi videtur ad id, quod concupivit habere, fortunam. Quod cum obtinuerit, quamvis putetur indigere quibusdam rebus ad corporis valetudinem pertinentibus; illud tamen constat, non his opus esse ut sapiens sit, sed ut inter homines vivat. Imo, ait ille, si caecus ac surdus sit; et sapientiam adipiscendam, et ipsam vitam propter quam sapientia quaeritur, mea sententia, jure contemnet.³

4. Tamen, inquam, cum ipsa vita nostra, qua hic vivimus, sit in potestate fortunae; nec nisi vivens quisque sapiens fieri possit: nonne fatendum est opus esse ejus favore, quo ad sapientiam pervehamur? Sed cum sapientia, inquit, non nisi viventibus sit necessaria, remotaque vita nulla sit indigentia sapientiae, nihil in propaganda vita pertimesco fortunam. Etenim quia vivo, propterea volo sapientiam, non quod sapientiam desidero, volo vitam. Unde fortuna si mihi abstulerit vitam, auferet causam quaerendae sapientiae. Nihil igitur habeo, cur ut fiam sapiens, aut favorem optem fortunae, aut impedimenta formidem, nisi alia fortasse protuleris. Tum ego: Non igitur censes sapientiae studiosum posse a fortuna, ne ad sapientiam perveniat, impediri, etiam si ei non auferat vitam? Non arbitror, inquit.

3 Par. Er. Ven. *contemnit*.

III

5. Volo, inquam, mihi paululum aperias, quid tibi inter sapientem et philosophum distare videatur? Sapientem a studioso, ait, nulla re differre arbitror; nisi quod quarum

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thing which lies within the power of fortune—he cannot attain the object of his desire. But when he has attained it, although he is to be regarded as needing certain things that pertain to the well-being of the body, yet it is obvious that he needs them, not in order to be wise, but so that he may live among men.

“Nay, more,” says Alypius, “if he be blind and deaf, he will, I believe, condemn both the acquiring of wisdom and even life itself, for whose sake wisdom is sought.”

4. I say: Yet, since life itself, as we live it here, is in the power of fortune, and since only a living man can be wise, must we not admit that we need fortune’s favor in order to be drawn to wisdom?

He replies: “But—although it is only living persons that have need of wisdom, and although there is no desire for wisdom if life be wanting—I have absolutely no fear of fortune in the matter of conserving life. I desire wisdom, because I am living; it is not because I desire wisdom, that I wish to live. Hence, if fortune deprives me of life, it deprives me also of my reason for seeking wisdom. Therefore, in order to become wise, I have no reason either to desire fortune’s favor or to fear her opposition—unless, of course, you bring forward some other reasons.”

I say: Then, if a man be desirous of wisdom, you do not think that fortune can prevent his arriving at wisdom, unless it deprives him of life?

“I do not think so,” he replies.

CHAPTER III

5. I say: I wish you would give me at least some notion as to what you think to be the difference between a wise man and a philosopher.¹

He replies: “I think that there is no difference between

¹ The term, *philosopher*, means lover of wisdom.

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rerum in sapiente quidam habitus inest, earum est in studioso sola fragrantia. Quae sunt tandem istae res, inquam? Nam mihi nihil aliud videtur interesse, nisi quod alter scit sapientiam, alter scire desiderat. Si scientiam, inquit, modesto fine determinas, ipsam rem planius elocutus es. Quoquo modo, inquam, eam determinem, illud omnibus placuit, scientiam falsarum rerum esse non posse. In hoc mihi, inquit ille, visa fuit objicienda praescriptio, ne inconsiderata consensione mea facile in principalis illius quaestionis campis tua equitaret oratio. Plane, inquam, mihi nihil ubi equitare possem reliquisti. Nam nisi fallor, quod jamdudum molior, ad ipsum finem pervenimus. Si enim, ut subtiliter vereque dixisti, nihil inter sapientiae studiosum et sapientem interest, nisi quod iste amat, ille autem habet sapientiae disciplinam; unde etiam nomen ipsum, id est, habitum quemdam exprimere non cunctatus es; nemo autem habere disciplinam potest in animo, qui nihil didicit; nihil autem didicit, qui nihil novit; et nosse falsum nemo potest: novit igitur sapiens veritatem, quem disciplinam sapientiae habere in animo, id est habitum jam ipse con-

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a wise man and a man desirous of wisdom, except that in the man desirous of wisdom there is only an eagerness for those things of which the wise man has a constant possession."²

I say: And indeed, what are those things? To me, the only thing that seems to differentiate those two, is the fact that one of them knows wisdom, and the other desires to know it.

He says: "If you confine the term, *knowledge*, within moderate limits, you have expressed the matter very plainly."

I say: Howsoever I may confine it, all agree that there can be no knowledge of false things.³

He says: "I thought it well to interpose a demurrer at that point, lest, by a too ready agreement on my part, your plea might go prancing over the ground of the principal question."

I say: Obviously, you have left me no ground on which to prance. If I am not mistaken, we have already reached the objective itself—something I have been long trying to do. For if, as you have said with nicety and truth, there is no difference between a wise man and a man desirous of wisdom, except that the former has a knowledge of wisdom and the latter has a love for it—and hence, you have not hesitated to coin its very name: you have called it a constant possession—then, a wise man knows truth. For, no one who has learned nothing, can have knowledge in his mind; and the man who knows nothing, has learned nothing; and no one can know the false. Therefore, a wise man knows the truth; for, by your own admission, he has a knowledge—or a constant possession—of wisdom in his mind.

² Since the disputants invariably cite Cicero as authority, we translate the term, *habitus*, according to Cicero's definition of it. Cf. *De inventione rhetorica*, I, xxv, 36.

³ Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xxiv, 77. ✓

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fessus es. Nescio, inquit, cujus impudentiae sim, si habitum inquisitionis divinarum humanarumque rerum esse in sapiente confessum me negare voluero. Sed qui tibi videatur inventorum probabilium habitus non esse, non video. Concedis mihi, inquam, falsa neminem scire? Facile id quidem, inquit. Dic jam si potes, inquam, sapientem nescire sapientiam. Quid enim, ait, hoc limite universa concludis, ut videri sibi non possit, comprehendisse se sapientiam? Da, inquam, dexteram. Nam si meministi, hoc est quod heri me dixi effecturum, quod nunc non a me conclusum, sed a te ultro mihi oblatum esse gaudeo. Nam cum inter me et Academicos hoc interesse dixissem, quod illis probabile visum est veritatem non posse comprehendere; mihi autem nondum quidem a me inventam, inveniri tamen posse a sapiente videatur: nunc tu cum mea interrogatione urgereris, utrum sapiens nesciat sapientiam, videtur sibi scire, dixisti. Quid tum postea, inquit? Quia si videtur sibi, inquam, scire sapientiam, non ei videtur nihil scire posse sapientem. Aut si sapientia nihil est, volo affirmes.

6. Crederem vere, inquit, ad calcem nos finemque venisse; sed repente cum dexteras interposuisti, disjunctissimos nos esse et in longum progressos video: videlicet quod

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He says: "I know not what my impudence would be, if I should deny my having confessed that a wise man has a constant possession of the inquiry into divine and human things. But I do not see why you should think that there is no constant possession of things that have been discovered as probable."

I say: Do you concede that no one knows false things?

"Very readily," he replies.

I say: Then, maintain—if you can—that a wise man does not know wisdom.⁴

He replies: "But why do you restrict everything within such a narrow limit, that it cannot *seem* to him that he has comprehended wisdom?"

I say: Let us shake hands. You remember that yesterday I promised to prove this very point. I am happy now, not because it has been conclusively proved by me, but because it is freely conceded by you. I said that there was only one point of difference between the Academics and myself; namely, that to them it seemed probable that truth could not be comprehended, whilst to me it seemed that—although it had not yet been discovered by myself—it could be discovered by a wise man. And now—when you were being pressed by my interrogations as to whether a wise man does not have a knowledge of wisdom—you said that it seems to him that he does.

"And what of that?" he asks.

I reply: It follows that if it seems to him that he knows wisdom, it does not seem to him that a wise man can know nothing. Of course, if wisdom is nothing, I wish you would say so.

6. He says: "I would indeed believe that we have reached our final goal. But just as we were clasping hands, I suddenly see that we are very far apart, and that we have gone beyond the limits of the question; for, when you

⁴ Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, viii, 24.

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hesterno die a nobis nulla alia quaestio constituta videbatur, nisi quod sapientem ad comprehensionem veri pervenire posse, affirmante te, ego negaveram: nunc vero nihil me opinor concessisse tibi, quam videri posse sapienti probabiliū rerum se consecutum esse sapientiam: quam tamen sapientiam in investigatione divinarum humanarumque rerum me constituisse nulli nostrum arbitror dubium. Non, inquam, ideo quia involvis, evolveris: videris enim jam mihi exercendi tui causa disputare. Et quia bene nosti istos adolescentulos vix adhuc posse discernere quae acute ac subtiliter disseruntur, tanquam iudicum abuteris ignorantia, ut tibi quantumlibet loqui nullo liceat reclamante. Nam paulo ante dixisti, cum quaererem utrum sciret sapiens sapientiam, scire sibi videri. Cui ergo videtur sapientem scire sapientiam, non utique videtur nihil scire sapientem. Hoc enim contendere non potest, nisi quisquam dicere audeat, nihil esse sapientiam. Ex quo fit, ut jam hoc tibi, quod etiam mihi, videatur; nam mihi videtur sapientem nonnihil scire, et tibi, opinor, cui placet, videri sapienti sapientem scire sapientiam. Tum ille, Non magis me ingenium exercere velle quam te, arbitror; et id miror, non enim tibi ulla in hanc rem exercitatione opus est. Nam mihi adhuc fortasse caeco videtur interesse inter videri sibi scire, et scire; et inter sapientiam quae in investigatione posita est, et veritatem: quae a nobis cum alterutra dicantur, sibi quemadmodum quadrent non invenio. Tum ego,

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took the affirmative side yesterday and I took the negative, it seemed to me that the only question assigned for debate, was this: Whether a wise man can acquire an understanding of truth. And I now think that I have conceded nothing more than that it can seem to a wise man that he has acquired a wisdom of things that are probable. But I am sure that neither of us has any doubt that I limited that wisdom to the investigation of divine and human things."

I say: You are not extricating yourself by complicating matters. In fact, I think you are disputing merely for the sake of exercise. But, if I may say so, you are taking undue advantage of the ignorance of the judges. You know very well that those boys are as yet unable to discriminate acute and subtle arguments; and consequently, if nobody objects, you may say whatever you please. Now, just a little while ago—when I asked you whether a wise man knows wisdom—you said that it seems to a wise man that he knows wisdom. But, to whom it seems that a wise man knows wisdom, to him it certainly does not seem that a wise man knows nothing—at least, no one could think so, unless he be ready to assert that wisdom is nothing. Hence, it follows that your opinion on this matter is now the same as mine; for it seems to me that a wise man does not know nothing. And so, I believe, it seems to you as well; for you agree that it seems to a wise man that a wise man knows wisdom.

He says: "I believe that I am no more anxious to exercise my talents than you are. And I am surprised at that, because you have no need of any such exercise. Perhaps I am still blind; but, at any rate, it seems to me that there is a difference in meaning between, 'it seems to him that he knows' and 'he knows.' And I also believe that the truth is not identical with wisdom; for the latter is wholly occupied with investigating the former. And I do not see how those terms correspond, when we employ them respectively."

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cum jam ad prandium vocaremur; Non, inquam, mihi quod tantum reniteris displicet: aut enim ambo nescimus quid loquamur, et danda est opera ne tam turpes simus; aut unus nostrum, quod item relinquere atque negligere non minus turpe est: sed pomeridianis horis rediemus ad invicem. Mihi enim cum videretur jam nos ad calcem pervenisse, pugnos etiam miscuisti. Hic cum arrisissent, discessimus.

IV

7. Et cum redissemus, invenimus Licentium, cui nunquam sitiendi Helicon subvenisset, excogitandis versibus inhiantem. Nam de medio pene prandio, quamvis nostri prandii idem initium qui finis fuit, clam surrexerat, nihilque biberat. Cui ego, Opto quidem, inquam, tibi ut istam poeticam quam concupisti, complectaris aliquando: non quod me nimis delectet ista perfectio; sed quod video te tantum exarsisse, ut nisi fastidio evadere ab hoc amore non possis; quod evenire post perfectionem facile solet. Deinde cum sis bene canorus, malim auribus nostris inculces tuos versus; quam ut in illis graecis tragoediis, more avicularum quas in caveis inclusas videmus, verba quae non intelligis cantes. Admoneo tamen ut pergas potum, si voles, et ad scholam redeas nostram, si tamen aliquid jam de te Hortensius et philosophia meretur, cui dulcissimas primitias jam vestro illo sermone libasti, qui te vehementius quam ista

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Although we had now been called to lunch, I say: I am not at all displeased that you oppose me so strenuously, because perhaps neither of us understands what the other is saying, and certainly one or the other of us fails to understand it. In the first case, we must strive to escape that reproach; and even in the other case, it would be no less reproachful to neglect or abandon the question. But we shall meet again this afternoon; for, just when it seemed that we had reached the end, you exchanged blows with me. When they had laughed at this, we withdrew.

CHAPTER IV

7. And when we had returned, we found Licentius eagerly striving to compose verses. But Helicon would never have relieved him of his thirst; for—although only one course was served at our lunch—he had quietly withdrawn when we had reached about the middle, and he had drunk nothing.

I say to him: I wish that some day or other you would master that poetics, since you have become so ardently attached to it: not that this kind of perfection would afford me any great pleasure, but because I see you have become so eager for it, that you can be alienated from it only by disgust; and this readily happens after perfection has been reached. Furthermore, since you are quite musical, I should prefer to have you inflict your own verses on our ears, rather than have you—like the little birds we see enclosed in cages—singing words you do not understand in those Greek tragedies. But I advise you to go for a drink, if you have any regard for *Hortensius*¹ and philosophy. In fact, in that disputation between yourself and Trygetius, you have already offered her your first fruits as a most

¹ Note 3, page 244.

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poetica incenderat ad magnarum et vere fructuosarum rerum scientiam. Sed dum ad istarum disciplinarum, quibus excoluntur animi, circum¹ revocare vos cupio; metuo ne vobis labyrinthus fiat, et prope me poenitet ab illo te impetu repressisse. Erubuit ille, discessitque ut biberet. Nam et multum sitiebat, et occasio dabatur evitandi me, plura fortasse atque asperiora dicturum.

8. Et cum redisset, intentis omnibus, sic coepi: Itane est, Alypi, ut inter nos de re jam, ut mihi videtur, manifestissima non conveniat? Non mirum est, inquit, si quod tibi in promptu esse asseris, mihi obscurum sit: siquidem pleraque manifesta, possint aliis manifestiora, et item obscura quaedam, nonnullis obscuriora esse. Nam si et hoc tibi vere manifestum est, mihi crede, esse alium quemquam, cui et hoc manifestum tuum manifestius sit; et item alium cui meum obscurum obscurius sit. Sed ne me perpugnacem diutius putes, obsecraverim ut hoc manifestum manifestius edisseras. Attende, inquam, quaeso diligenter, et quasi seposita paululum respondendi cura. Si enim bene me atque te novi, facile data opera clarebit quod dico, et alter alteri cito persuadebit. Dixistine tandem, an fortasse absurdueram, videri sapienti se scire sapientiam? Annuit. Omittamus, inquam, paululum istum sapientem.

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pleasing libation; and she, far more than poetics, has enkindled in you a glowing desire for the knowledge of great and truly profitable things. But, while I wish to invite both of you back to the arena of those intellectual exercises that impart refinement to the mind, I fear lest it become a labyrinth for both of you. And I almost regret to have checked you, Licentius, from your decided inclination. Licentius blushed, and went for a drink. He was indeed very thirsty. And furthermore, he was now furnished an occasion for escaping me; for I might say more—and perhaps harsher—things to him.

8. When he had returned, and all had become attentive, I began in this way: Alypius, is it really true that you and I are still in disagreement on a matter which, in my opinion, is very manifest?

"It is not surprising," he replies, "if that be obscure to me, which you assert to be within your grasp; for many obvious things can be more obvious to some people, and some obscure things can likewise be more obscure to many others. Now, even if this matter is truly manifest to you, believe me that there is some one else to whom what is manifest to you, is still more manifest; and that there is yet some other person to whom that is more obscure, which is obscure to me. But, lest you continue to consider me unduly contentious, let me entreat you to give a more manifest explanation of this manifest thing."

I say: Please pay careful attention; and, for a moment at least, discard all worry about having to frame a rebuttal. Indeed, if I well know myself and you, then a little effort will suffice to clarify what I am saying; and after that, one of us will quickly convince the other. At all events, did you say—or was I deaf, at the moment?—that it seems to a wise man that he knows wisdom?

He agreed that he had said it.

I say: Let us disregard that wise man for the moment.

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Tu ipse sapiens es, an non? Nihil, inquit, minus. Volo tamen, inquam, respondeas mihi quid ipse sentias de sapiente Academico; utrumnam tibi videatur scire sapientiam? Utrum sibi, inquit, scire videatur an sciat, unumne an diversum putas? Metuo enim ne haec confusio cuiquam nostrum suffugium praebeat.

9. Hoc est, inquam, Tuscum illud iurgium quod dici solet, cum quaestioni intentatae non ejus solutio, sed alterius objectio videtur mederi. Quod etiam poeta noster (ut me aliquantum Licentii auribus dedam) decenter in Bucolico carmine hoc rusticanum et plane pastoricium esse judicavit, cum alter alterum interrogat, ubi coeli spatium non amplius quam tres ulnas pateat: ille autem,

*Dic quibus in terris inscripti nomina regum
Nascantur flores.*²

Quod quaeso, Alypi, ne in villa nobis licere arbitreris: certe vel istae balneolae aliquam decoris gymnasiorum faciant recordationem: ad id, si placet, quod rogo, responde. Videturne tibi sapiens Academicorum scire sapientiam? Ne verba verbis referendo, inquit, in longum eamus, videtur videri sibi scire. Videtur ergo, inquam, tibi nescire?

1 Editi habent, *circulum*. Sed melius mss. decem, *circum*.

2 Virgilii ecloga III, vv. 105-6.

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As to yourself, are you a wise man, or are you not?

"By no means," he replies.

I say: Nevertheless, I wish you would tell me what is your real conviction with regard to the Academic wise man. Does it really seem to you that he knows wisdom?

He rejoins: "Do you think that the question, 'Does he seem to know?' is the same as the question, 'Does he know?'" or rather that it is something different? For I fear lest this confusion should provide a subterfuge for either of us."

9. I say: This is what is usually called a Tuscan altercation—a sort of wrangling in which the answer to a proposed question seems to be supplied, not by its solution, but by the injection of another question. Our own poet—to accommodate myself somewhat to the ears of Licentius—in a Bucolic poem, fittingly adjudged it to be something rustic or plainly pastoral, when one man asked the other where it was that the whole expanse of the heavens was no more than three ells in width, and the other man rejoins:

*Tell me, in what regions do we see those wondrous things:
Flowers abursting unto life, inscribed with names of kings?*²

But, Alypius, please do not think that such mode of disputation is allowed to us at this villa. At least, let these little baths make us somewhat mindful of the decorum of the Gymnasia.³ So, please answer the question I am asking: Does it seem to you that the Academics' wise man knows wisdom?

He replies: "Lest we become prolix by mere verbal repetition, it seems to me that it seems to him that he knows it."

² Virgil, *Eclogue* III, vv. 105-7.

³ Where philosophers frequently held their disputations. Possibly, he is referring to Cicero's dialogues only. He afterwards mentions the gymnasium at Cumae and the one at Naples. (Cf. Bk. III, ch. XVI, no. 35.) Cicero calls Plato's Academy "a second Gymnasium." (*Academ.*, I, iv, 17).

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Non enim ego quaero quid tibi videatur videri sapienti, sed utrum tibi videatur sapiens scire sapientiam. Potes, ut opinor, hic aut aiere, aut negare. O utinam, inquit, aut ita mihi facile esset ut tibi, aut ita tibi difficile ut mihi! nec tam molestus esses, nec in his quidquam sperares. Nam cum me interrogares, quid mihi de Academico sapiente videatur; respondi, videri mihi quod videatur sibi scire sapientiam, ne aut temere me scire affirmarem, aut illum non minus temere scire dicerem. Pro magno, inquam, beneficio mihi obsecro concedas primo, ut ad id quod ego, non ad id quod tu te interrogas respondere digneris. Deinde ut spem meam, quam tibi non minus curae, quam tuam esse certo scio, nunc paululum omittas. Certe si me ista interrogatione decepero, cito transibo in tuam partem, controversiamque finiemus. Postremo ut pulsa nescio qua sollicitudine, qua te tangi video, diligentius animadvertas, quo facile intelligas quid mihi abs te responderi velim. Dixisti enim ideo te non aut aiere aut negare, quod utique faciendum est ad id quod rogo, ne temere te scire dicas quod nescis: quasi vero ego quid scias quaesierim, et non quid tibi videatur. Itaque nunc idem planius (si tamen planius dici potest) interrogo: Videturne tibi scire sapientiam sapiens, an non videtur? Si inveniri, inquit, sapiens qualem ratio prodit, queat; potest mihi videri scire sapi-

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I say: Does it, then, seem to you that he does not know it? For I am asking you, not what it seems to you that it seems to the wise man, but whether it seems to you that the wise man knows wisdom. You can, I suppose, give an unqualified affirmative or negative answer.

He says: "O, would that it were either as easy for me as it is for you, or as difficult for you as it is for me. You would not then be so insistent, nor would you be expecting anything from me in those matters. For, in order to guard against either rashly asserting that I knew, or not less rashly asserting that he knew, I replied—when you were asking me what it seemed to me with regard to the Academic wise man—'that it seemed to him that he knew wisdom.'"

I say: I beg you, as a distinct favor to me:—in the first place, that you deign to answer the question which I am asking you, and not the one that you are proposing to yourself; then, that you momentarily disregard my expectation in the matter, which I know for certain to be of no less concern to you than your own—assuredly, if I ensnare myself by this line of questioning, I shall quickly change over to your side; and we shall put an end to the controversy—finally, that you dispel that solicitude of some kind with which I see you to be affected, and pay very strict attention, so that you may easily understand what question of mine I want you to answer. Now, an unqualified "yes" or "no" is the only kind of answer demanded by my question. But you said that you did not give such an answer, lest you should rashly assert that you knew something which you did not know—just as if I had asked what you know, and not what it seems to you. Now, I frame the question more plainly—if indeed it can be expressed more plainly: Does it seem to you that a wise man knows wisdom, or does it not?

He replies: "If there could be found the kind of wise man that reason describes, he could seem to me to know wisdom."

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entiam. Ratio igitur, inquam, talem tibi prodit esse sapientem, qui sapientiam non ignoret: et recte isthuc. Non enim aliter decebat videri tibi.

10. Quaero ergo jam, utrum possit sapiens inveniri. Si enim potest, potest etiam scire sapientiam, omnisque quaestio inter nos dissoluta est. Si autem non posse dicis, jam non quaeretur utrum sapiens aliquid sciat, sed utrum sapiens quisquam esse possit. Quo constituto, jam recedendum erit ab Academicis, et tecum ista quaestio quantum valemus, diligenter cauteque versanda. Nam illis placuit, vel potius visum est, et esse posse hominem sapientem, et tamen in hominem scientiam cadere non posse. Quare illi sapientem nihil scire affirmarunt. Tibi autem videtur scire sapientiam, quod non est utique nihil scire. Simul enim placuit inter nos, quod etiam inter omnes veteres, interque ipsos Academicos, scire falsa neminem posse: unde illud jam restat, ut aut contendas nihil esse sapientiam, aut talem sapientem ab Academicis describi, qualem ratio non habet, fatearis.

V

11. Et his omissis consentias ut quaeramus, utrum possit homini talis provenire sapientia, qualem prodit ratio. Non enim aliam debemus, aut possumus recte vocare sapientiam. Etsi concedam, inquit, quod te magnopere niti

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I say: Therefore, reason shows you that a wise man is the kind of man that is not ignorant of wisdom. And that is correct; for it would ill become you to hold any other opinion.

10. Accordingly, I now ask whether a wise man can be found. For if he can be found, he can know wisdom; and in that case, the whole question between us is solved. But if you say that he cannot be found, then the question will be, not whether a wise man can know something, but whether any one can be wise. And if it is established that some one can be wise, we shall have to part company with the Academics; and the question must then be threshed out with you, insofar as we are able. For they have agreed—or rather, it seemed to them—that a man can be wise, but that knowledge cannot accrue to any man. Wherefore, they maintained that a wise man knows nothing; but it seems to you that he knows wisdom—and certainly, that is not to know nothing. And furthermore, you and I—as well as all the Ancients, the Academics included—agreed that no one can know false things.⁴ Hence, the only remaining alternative is this: either to maintain that wisdom is nothing, or to admit that reason does not recognize the kind of man described as wise by the Academics.

4 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xxxii, 103.

CHAPTER V

11. Without further argument on these points, please consent to our investigating whether wisdom, such as reason reveals it, can accrue to a man; for we should not—nay, we could not—call anything else wisdom.

He says: “Even if I should concede—what, I see, you

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video, sciri a sapiente sapientiam, et aliquid inter nos prehensum quod sapiens possit percipere; tamen nequam mihi occurrit Academicorum labefactata omnis intentio. Prospicio enim defensionis eis locum non minimum reservatum, nec illam assensionis suspensionem esse praecisam, cum hoc ipso causae suae deesse non possint, quo convictos putas. Dicent enim usqueadeo nihil comprehendere, nullique rei assensionem praebendam, ut etiam hoc de nihil percipiendo, quod tota sibi pene vita usque ad te probabiliter persuaserant, nunc ista conclusione sibi extortum sit: ut sive tunc, sive nunc hujus argumenti vis tarditate ingenii mei, sive revera suo robore invicta sit, eos loco movere non possit, cum audacter affirmare adhuc valeant, ne nunc quidem ulli rei consentiendum esse. Forte enim aliquando contra hoc quoque nonnihil vel a se vel a quopiam reperiri posse, quod acute probabiliterque dicatur: suamque imaginem et quasi speculum quoddam in Proteo illo animadverti oportere, qui traditur eo solere capi quo minime caperetur, investigatoresque ejus nunquam eundem tenuisse, nisi indice alicujusmodi numine.¹ Quod si adsit, et illam nobis veritatem quae tantum curae est demonstrare dignetur, ego quoque vel ipsis invitis, quod minime reor, illos superatos esse confitebor.

1 Hujus loci mentio fit libro II^o de Ordine, cap. 15, n. 43.

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are earnestly striving for—that wisdom is known by a wise man, and that we have thus found something which a wise man is able to discern, the main contention of the Academics does not seem to me to be weakened in any way; for I descry a rather redoubtable defense position reserved for them, where they are not cut off from the withholding of assent. That argument by which you think them to be vanquished, will not force them to abandon their position altogether. With regard to their two aphorisms, namely, ‘that nothing is understood’ and ‘that assent is not to be given to anything,’ they will say that these aphorisms are of such a nature that, although the first one has been wrested from them by your siege of their stronghold, yet the force of your attack could not then—and cannot now—dislodge them from their position. For, whether that argument be invincible by virtue of its inherent cogency or by reason of my stupidity, and even if it has deprived them of the first of their two aphorisms—an aphorism which nearly all generations down to your own, had accepted as probable—they can still boldly continue to proclaim their other aphorism, namely, ‘that assent is not to be given to anything.’ Furthermore, they will say that perhaps some day they themselves or some one else may discover a subtle argument that can be urged with probability against this aphorism as well, but that meanwhile their own reflected image, so to speak, is to be seen in Proteus; for he is represented as being usually captured precisely when his capture was to be least expected. In fact, it is said that his pursuers never laid hold on him unless some deity was directing them towards him.⁵ Now, if that deity be with us, and show us that truth which is of so much anxiety to us, then I shall admit that the Academics are vanquished, even if they should still continue to resist—but I do not believe they would.”

⁵ Virgil, *Georgics*, IV, 388 *sqq.* Cf. St. Augustine, *De ordine*, II, xv, 43.

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12. Bene habet, inquam; prorsus nihil amplius optavi. Nam videte, quaeso, bona mihi quot et quanta provenerint. Primum est, quod Academici jam sic convicti esse dicuntur, ut nihil eis restet ad defensionem, nisi quod fieri non potest. Quis enim hoc aut intelligere ullo modo, aut credere valeat, eum qui victus sit, eo ipso quo victus est, victorem se esse gloriari? Deinde si quid jam remanet cum his conflictionis, non ex eo est quod dicunt, nihil sciri posse, sed ex eo quod nulli rei assentiendum esse contendunt. Nunc itaque concordēs sumus. Nam ut mihi, ita etiam illis videtur, sapientem scire sapientiam. Sed tamen ab assensione illi temperandum monent. Videri enim sibi tantum dicunt; scire autem nullo modo: quasi ego me scire profitear. Mihi quoque videri istud dico: sum enim stultus, ut etiam ipsi, si nesciunt sapientiam. Approbare autem nos debere aliquid puto, id est, veritatem. De quo eos consulo utrum negent, id est utrum eis placeat veritati assentiendum non esse. Nunquam hoc dicent, sed eam non inveniri asseverabunt. Ergo et hic ex nonnulla parte socium me tenent, quod utrisque non displicet, atque adeo necessario placet, consentiendum esse veritati. Sed quis eam demonstrabit, inquit? Ubi ego cum illis non curabo certare; satis mihi est quod jam probabile non est, nihil scire sapientem, ne rem absurdissimam dicere cogantur, aut nihil esse sapientiam, aut sapientiam nescire sapientem.

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12. I say: That is well said. I desired absolutely nothing more. And so, I now ask all of you to note the many signal blessings that have come upon me. In the first place, the Academics are declared to be so completely vanquished that nothing remains for them by way of defense, except something that is impossible. For who could ever understand or believe that a conquered man would vaunt himself a victor precisely because he is conquered? And moreover, if there remains any conflict with them now, it arises, not from their saying that nothing can be understood, but from their insisting that assent is not to be given to anything. Therefore, they and I are now in agreement; for now it seems to them—as it also seems to me—that a wise man knows wisdom. But they admonish us to refrain from assent; for they say that this merely seems so to them, but that they do not know it by any means. As if I were professing to know it! Why, I also say that it merely seems so to me. And, just as they are unwise if they know not wisdom, so also am I. Nevertheless, I think we ought to accept something as true; we ought to accept the truth as true. I ask them whether they deny this—in other words, whether they are of the opinion that assent ought not to be given to the truth. Of course, they will never say that they are of that opinion; but they will assert that the truth is not being found. Consequently, I am in considerable agreement with them on this point also; for it is not contrary to their opinion or to mine—and, therefore, it is in accordance with it—that assent ought to be given to the truth. “But who will show us the truth?” they ask. I shall decline to discuss that point with them; for it is enough for me that—lest they be forced to profess the greatest absurdity, namely, either that wisdom is nothing, or that a wise man does not know wisdom—it is no longer probable that a wise man knows nothing.

VI

13. Quis autem verum possit ostendere, abs te, Alypi, dictum est, a quo ne dissentiam magnopere mihi laborandum est. Etenim numen aliquod aisti solum posse ostendere homini quid sit verum, cum breviter, tum etiam pie. Nihil itaque in hoc sermone nostro libentius audiui, nihil gravius, nihil probabilius, et, si id numen ut confido adsit, nihil verius. Nam et Proteus ille quanta abs te mentis altitudine commemoratus, quanta intentione in optimum philosophiae genus? Proteus enim ille, ut vos adolescentes non penitus poetas a philosophia contemnendos esse videatis, in imaginem veritatis inducitur. Veritatis, inquam, Proteus in carminibus ostentat sustinetque personam, quam obtinere nemo potest, si falsis imaginibus deceptus comprehensionis nodos vel laxaverit vel dimiserit. Sunt enim istae imagines, quae consuetudine rerum corporalium per istos quibus ad necessaria hujus vitae utimur sensus, nos etiam cum veritas tenetur, et quasi habetur in manibus, decipere atque illudere moliuntur. Hoc ergo tertium bonum mihi accidit, quod non invenio quanti aestimem. Mecum enim familiarissimus amicus meus, non solum de probabilitate humanae vitae, verum etiam de ipsa religione concordat, quod est veri amici manifestissimum indicium. Siquidem amicitia rectissime atque sanctissime definita est, rerum humanarum et divinarum cum benevolentia et charitate consensio.

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CHAPTER VI

13. But, Alypius, you have told us who it is that is able to show us truth; and I must sedulously endeavor not to disagree with you. Alike with brevity and piety, you have said that only some kind of deity is able to show a man what truth is.¹ Wherefore, in this discussion of ours, I have heard nothing more pleasing, nothing more weighty, nothing more worthy of approval, and—if, as I trust, that deity be present—nothing more true. For, with what depth of understanding, with what fixation of attention on the very best kind of philosophy, has the famous Proteus been mentioned by you! That Proteus—so that you, boys, may see that poets are not to be entirely disregarded in philosophy—is portrayed after the image of the truth. In poems, I say, Proteus portrays and personates the truth, which no one can lay hold on, if he is deceived by false images, and loosens or loses his hold on the nodes of understanding. For, even when the truth is being grasped and, as it were, held in our hands, those images strive—in the usual manner of corporeal things—to deceive and delude us through the very senses which we use for the needs of this life. Therefore, this is a third blessing that has come to me, and I deem it inestimable: my most intimate friend is in accord with me, not only on the question of probability in human affairs, but also on religion itself;² and this is the most manifest sign of a true friend, inasmuch as friendship has been rightly and piously defined as “a friendly and affectionate agreement on human things and on divine.”³

1 “If I had not sought Thy way in Christ our Saviour, I would have arrived at destruction instead of instruction.” *Confessions*, VII, xx, 26.

2 As yet, Augustine had given no definition of religion. We may assume that he was in agreement with Cicero as to the derivation of the word, *religio*, from *relegere*. (*De natura deorum*, II, xxviii, 72). About three years later, however, he says that the

VII

14. Tamen ne aut Academicorum argumenta quasdam nebulas videantur offundere, aut doctissimorum virorum auctoritati, inter quos maxime Tullius non movere nos non potest, superbe nonnullis resistere videamur; si vobis placet, prius pauca contra eos disseram, quibus videntur disputationes illae adversari veritati. Deinde ut mihi videtur, ostendam quae causa fuerit Academicis occultandae sententiae suae. Itaque, Alypi, quamvis te totum in meis partibus videam, tamen suscipe pro his paululum, mihi que responde. Quoniam hodie, inquit, auspicato, ut aiunt, processisti, non impediam plenissimam victoriam tuam, et partes illas jam securius, quo abs te imponuntur, tentabo suscipere; si tamen hoc quod interrogationibus te acturum esse significas, in orationem perpetuam (si tibi commodum est) malis convertere; ne vere ut pertinax adversarius, quod a tua humanitate longissimum est, minutis illis telis abs te jam captivus excrucier.

15. Atque ego cum et illos hoc exspectare animadverterem, quasi aliud ingressus exordium: Morem, inquam, vobis geram. Et quamvis post illum laborem scholae rhetoricae in hac me levi armatura nonnihil requieturum

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word is thought to be derived from *religare*. (*De vera religione*, lv, 111); and still later, he believes it to be derived from *religere*. (*De civ. Dei*, X, iii, 1). In his *De diversis quaestionibus*, (qu. XXX, 1), he defines religion as "that which advances the love and veneration of a certain superior nature, which they call divine."

3 Cicero, *Laelius*, vi, 20.

CHAPTER VII

14. Yet, so that the arguments of the Academics may not seem to envelop us in some kind of fog, and so that we ourselves may not seem arrogantly to resist the authority of very learned men—and among them is Tullius, who cannot but deeply impress us—I shall first give a few arguments against those who think that those disputations are opposed to the truth. Then I shall show what, in my opinion, was the reason why the Academics sought to conceal their theory. Wherefore, Alypius, although I see that you are now unreservedly on my side, I nevertheless ask you to defend their side for a little while, and to reply to me.

Alypius says: "Because you have, as they say, proceeded prosperously today, I shall not impede your complete victory. And because their defense has been assigned to me by you, I shall undertake it all the more fearlessly. But as to the plea which you show that you are about to make by way of cross-examination—if you should prefer to mold it into an uninterrupted discourse, and if it suits you to do so, then let me not, like a stubborn captive foeman, be tortured by you with those little darts; for that would be entirely out of keeping with your kindness of character."

15. And then, because I saw that they were expecting me to adopt his suggestion, I begin, as it were, another exordium. I say: I had presupposed that, after my fatigue in the school of rhetoric, I would have considerable rest here

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esse praesumpseram, ut interrogando ista potius agerem quam dicendo; tamen quia et paucissimi sumus, ut clamare mihi contra valetudinem meam non sit necesse; et istum stilum causa ejusdem salutis quasi aurigam moderatoremque sermonis mei esse volui, ne concitatus rapiar animo quam cura corporis poscit: perpetua, ut vultis, oratione audite quid sentiam. Sed primo illud videamus quale sit, unde amatores Academicorum gloriari nimium solent. Nam est in libris Ciceronis, quos in hujus causae patrocinium scripsit, locus quidam, ut mihi videtur, mira urbanitate conditus, ut nonnullis autem, etiam firmitate roboratus. Difficile est prorsus, ut quemquam non moveat, quod ibi dictum est, Academico sapienti ab omnibus caeterarum sectarum qui sibi sapientes videntur, secundas partes dari, cum primas sibi quemque vindicare necesse sit. Ex quo posse probabiliter confici, eum recte primum esse judicio suo, qui omnium caeterorum judicio sit secundus.

16. Fac enim, verbi causa, Stoicum adesse sapientem; nam contra eos potissimum Academicorum exarsit ingenium: ergo Zeno vel Chrysippus si interrogentur, quis sit sapiens; respondebit eum esse quem ipse descripserit. Contra Epicurus vel quis alius adversariorum negabit, suumque potius peritissimum voluptatum aucupem sapientem esse contendet. Inde ad jurgium: clamat Zeno, et tota

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in light armor, because I had planned to prosecute those matters by interrogating rather than by discoursing. Still, since we are so few that it will not be necessary for me to shout—that would be bad for my health; and it was for the sake of my health that I wished to make the stylus the herald and, as it were, the moderator of my discourse, lest I should be carried along more animatedly than my physical weakness renders advisable¹—I shall comply with your wish. Therefore, since you desire it, hear my views, expressed in an uninterrupted discourse.

But first of all, let us examine the nature of that which is made the chief boast of those who ardently defend the Academics. In the works which Cicero composed in defense of their case, there is a certain passage which, in my opinion, is seasoned with admirable urbanity, and which, in the opinion of very many, is also strengthened with consistency. Certainly it would be hard for anyone to remain unmoved by what is stated in that passage, namely, "that the Academic wise man is unanimously adjudged second best by all those of the other sects who deem themselves wise, while each one of them necessarily claims first place for himself; and that from this, it can be argued with probability that the Academic is right in judging himself to be first, since he is second in the estimation of all the others.

16. "Suppose, for example, that the Stoic wise man be present, for it is especially against the Stoics that the genius of the Academics was enkindled. So, if some one inquires as to who is the wise man, Zeno or Chrysippus will reply that a wise man is the man whom he himself has described. Epicurus or some other adversary will contradict this, and will contend rather that the most skillful snatcher of pleasures is the wise man. And hence, the altercation! The

¹ See note 5, page 249.

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illa porticus tumultuatur, hominem natum ad nihil esse aliud quam honestatem; ipsam suo splendore in se animos ducere, nullo prorsus commodo extrinsecus posito et quasi lenocinante mercede: voluptatemque illam Epicuri solis inter se pecoribus esse communem: in quorum societatem et hominem et sapientem trudere nefas esse. Contra ille convocata de hortulis in auxilium quasi libera turba temulentorum, quaerentium tamen quem incomptis unguibus bacchantes asperoque ore discerpant, voluptatis nomen, suavitatem, quietem, teste populo, exaggerans, instat acriter, ut nisi ea beatus nemo esse posse videatur. In quorum rixam si Academicus incurrerit, utrosque audiet trahentes se ad suas partes: sed si in illos aut in istos concesserit, ab eis quos deserit, insanus, imperitus, temerariusque clamabitur. Itaque cum et hac et illac aurem diligenter admoverit, interrogatus quid ei videatur, dubitare se dicet. Roga nunc stoicum, quis sit melior; Epicurusne qui delirare illum clamat, an Academicus qui sibi adhuc de re tanta deliberandum esse pronuntiat. Nemo dubitat Academicum praelatum iri. Rursus te ad illum converte, et quaere quem magis amet; Zenonem, a quo bestia nominatur; an Archesilam, a quo audit: Tu fortasse verum dicis, sed requiram diligentius. Nonne apertum est totam illam porticum insanam, Academicos autem prae illis modestos cautosque homines videri Epicuro? Ita peraeque prope

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whole Stoic school is in tumult: Zeno is shouting that man is born for nothing else than virtue; that virtue offers absolutely no other reward than herself—that she does not pander for hire, so to speak, but attracts minds by her very splendor; that the Epicurean pleasure is common to all beasts and to beasts only;² and that it is abominable to push a man—and especially, a wise man—into their companionship. To oppose this, Epicurus now calls to his aid, so to speak, a turbulent mob of drunken men from the vineyards. With distorted countenances, these men rave in Bacchic fury, in frantic search of some one to tear to pieces with their unclipped claws.³ And with the mob's approval, Epicurus is elevating the name of pleasure to that of refinement and repose. He is impassionately insisting that it seems no man can be happy except through pleasure. But if an Academic should happen to stumble into their quarrel, he will hear both parties trying to drag him to their respective sides. And if he yields to either party, the other will call him stupid, ignorant and rash. Consequently, if he is asked his opinion after he has listened to both parties, he will reply that he is still in doubt. Now, ask the Stoic this question: 'Which is the better—Epicurus, who is shouting that every Stoic is out of his wits, or the Academic, who says that he must deliberate further on such an important matter?' No one doubts that the Academic will be preferred. Then, turn your attention to Epicurus, and ask him which one he esteems more highly: Is it Zeno or Arcesilas? Zeno is calling him a beast; but from Arcesilas he gets this response: 'Perhaps what you say, is true; but I shall examine it more carefully.' Is it not plain that to Epicurus the whole Stoic school seems stupid; and that, in comparison with the Stoics, the Academics seem to be modest and circumspect men?"⁴

2 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xlv, 139.

3 Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan. Quaest.*, III, xxi, 50.

4 Cicero, *Academ.*, frag. 20, Müller.

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de omnibus sectis copiosissime Cicero jucundissimum legentibus quasi spectaculum praebet, velut ostendens nullum illorum esse qui non cum sibi primas partes dederit, quod necesse est, secundas ei dicat dare, quem non repugnare, sed dubitare conspexerit. In quo ego nihil adversabor, nec eis ullam¹ auferam gloriam. Videatur sane quibuslibet Cicero hic non jocatus, sed inania et ventosa quaedam, quod ab ipsorum Graeculorum levitate abhorret,² sequi et colligere voluisse.

1 Am. et Er. habent, *nec ei Syllae auferam gloriam.*

2 In prius excusis, *non abhorreret.*

VIII

17. Quid enim me impedit, quin si huic vanitati resistere velim, facile ostendam quanto minus malum sit indoctum esse quam indocilem? Unde fit ut cum se ille Academicus jactanticulus quasi discipulum singulis dederit, nemoque illi quod se scire putat, persuadere potuerit; magna illorum postea consensione rideatur. Jam enim quisque alium quemlibet adversariorum suorum nihil didicisse, hunc vero nihil posse discere judicabit. Ex quo deinceps de omnium scholis non ferulis, quod esset deformius quam molestius, sed illorum palliatorum clavis et fustibus

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In this fashion, and with almost the same wealth of material with regard to all the sects, Cicero presents, as it were, a lively representation to his readers. He shows that, although it is inevitable that each sect award first place to itself, yet there is none of them which does not declare that it awards the second place to the man whom it finds to be, not in opposition, but in doubt. I shall not object to that: I shall take none of their glory away from them. To whomsoever it pleases, let it seem that in that passage Cicero was not joking, but that he wished to follow up and to collect certain vain and vacuous rantings, because he abhorred the levity of the puny imitators of the Greeks.⁵

⁵ Cicero was by no means contemptuous of the great Greek philosophers. His own eclecticism was culled from their teachings. In his opinion, Aristotle was almost peerless in philosophy, and both Aristotle and Plato were divine geniuses. But he seldom conceals his contempt for "certain insignificant philosophers" and especially for those who make use of specious arguments. (Cf. *Academ.*, II, xvi, 49; *ibid.*, xliii, 132; *de fin.*, I, iii, 7; *Cato M.*, xxiii, 85.)

CHAPTER VIII

17. But if I should wish to oppose this vanity, what hinders me from showing how much worse it is to be unteachable than to be untaught? When this boastful Academic will have presented himself as a pupil to each sect in turn, and when all of them will have been unable to persuade him to accept what they respectively think they know, it happens that afterwards he will be laughed at by all of them in marvelous unison; for, while each one of them will think that none of his own adversaries has ever learned anything, all of them will believe that the Academic is unable to learn. Consequently, he will be thrown out of all their schools, not by the ferule—this would be a humiliation rather than a punishment—but by

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projicietur. Non enim magnum negotium erit, contra communem pestem velut Herculeae quaedam postulare auxilia Cynicorum. Si autem ista vilissima gloria cum his certare libeat, quod philosophanti mihi jam quidem, sed nondum sapienti faciliore venia concedendum est; quid habebunt quod possint refellere? Ecce enim faciamus me atque Academicum in illas lites philosophorum irruisse: omnes prorsus adsint, exponant breviter pro tempore sententias suas. Quaeratur de Carneade quid sentiat. Dubitare se dicet. Itaque illum singuli praeferent caeteris. Ergo omnes omnibus: magna nimirum atque altissima gloria. Quis istum nolit imitari? et ego itaque interrogatus, idem respondebo; par erit laus. Ea igitur gloria gaudet sapiens, in qua illi stultus aequatur? Quid si eum etiam facile superat? Nihilne agit pudor? Nam istum Academicum jam de judicio discedentem tenebo. Quippe avidior hujusmodi victoriae stultitia est. Ergo eo retento prodam iudicibus quod ignorant, et dicam: Ego, viri optimi, hoc cum isto commune habeo, quod dubitat quis vestrum verum sequatur. Sed habemus etiam proprias sententias, de quibus peto iudicetis. Nam mihi incertum est quidem, quamvis audierim decreta vestra, ubi sit verum: sed ideo quod qui sit in vobis sapiens, ignoro. Iste autem etiam ipsum sapientem negat aliquid scire, ne ipsam quidem, unde sapiens

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the spiked cudgels of those who wear the pallium; for it will not be difficult to get some help from the Cynics, as a kind of Herculean aid against a common nuisance.¹ But if one should wish to contend with the Academics for that paltry glory, what can they proffer in rebuttal? And very readily ought I to be allowed to contend with them; for I am indeed applying myself to philosophy, but I am not yet become wise. So, let us suppose that an Academic and myself have rushed into the litigations of those philosophers; that, insofar as time permits, they give a brief exposition of their respective theories; and that Carneades is questioned as to his views. He will say that he is in doubt. And, consequently, each one of them will prefer him to the others. Therefore, all of them will prefer him to all of them! A high honor, forsooth, and a great glory! Who would not want to imitate him? Accordingly, when I am interrogated, I shall give the same answer; and I shall receive just as much praise. Does a wise man rejoice in a glory in which a fool is his equal? And what, if he easily surpasses him? Is he devoid of shame? Now, I shall stop that Academic as he is leaving the courtroom, since folly is most avid for this sort of victory. Therefore, keeping a tight hold on him, I shall disclose to the judges what they do not know. I shall address them in this way: "My good men, I have one thing in common with this man, namely, that he doubts which one of you is following the truth. However, he and I have our own distinct theories; and I petition that you adjudicate upon them. As to myself, although I have heard your doctrines expounded, I am nevertheless uncertain as to where the truth is to be found; but my uncertainty is due to the fact that I do not know which one of you is a wise man. But as to this Academic—why, he denies that even a wise man can know anything

¹ The pallium was the distinctive gown of the Greek philosophers; and the Cynics were usually represented as carrying cudgels.

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dicitur, sapientiam. Quis non videat palma illa cujus sit? Nam si hoc adversarius meus dixerit, vincam gloria; si autem erubescens confessus fuerit sapientem scire sapientiam, vincam sententia.

IX

18. Sed ab hoc jam litigioso tribunali secedamus in aliquem locum, ubi nobis nulla turba molesta sit; atque utinam in ipsam scholam Platonis, quae nomen ex eo dicitur accepisse, quod a populo sit secreta: hic jam non de gloria, quod leve ac puerile est, sed de ipsa vita, et de aliqua spe animi beati, quantum inter nos possumus, disseramus. Negant Academici sciri aliquid posse. Unde hoc vobis placuit, studiosissimi homines atque doctissimi? Movit nos, inquiunt, definitio Zenonis. Cur quaeso? Nam si vera est, nonnihil veri novit, qui vel ipsam novit; sin falsa, non debuit constantissimos commovere. Sed videamus quid ait Zeno. Tale scilicet visum comprehendere et percipi posse, quale cum falso non haberet signa communia. Hoccine te movit, homo Platonice, ut omnibus viribus ab spe discendi studiosos retraheres, ut totum negotium philosophandi adjuvante quodam etiam mentis ingemiscendo torpore desererent?

19. Sed quomodo illum non permoveret, si et nihil tale

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whatever, even wisdom itself, whence he is called a wise man." What manner of man would not see at once who it is that gets the palm of victory in this case? For, if my adversary really holds the opinion that I ascribe to him, I shall surpass him in glory; and if he blushingly admits that a wise man knows wisdom, I shall win the decision.

CHAPTER IX

18. Let us now withdraw from that litigious tribunal to some place where no mob will molest us. And would that we could retire to the very school of Plato, which is said to have received its distinctive name because it was remote from the multitude.¹ But even here, let us, to the best of our ability, discourse among ourselves, not on glory—which is something trivial and puerile—but on life itself, and on whatever happiness of mind we may dare to hope for. The Academics say that nothing can be known. But, most zealous and learned men, how do you come to believe that? "Zeno's definition leads us to it," they reply. And why? I ask. For, if that definition is true, then whoever knows it, knows something that is true; and if it is false, it should not move men who are of the utmost constancy. But let us see what Zeno says. He says that a sense datum can be known and understood, if it has no marks in common with what is false.² Now, my dear Platonist, did that move you to strive with all your might to draw zealous men away from the hope of learning, so that—since some kind of deplorable mental torpor was aiding in the same direction—they would totally abandon their occupation with philosophy? ✓

19. But if nothing of this character can be found, and if

¹ See note 9, page 255.

² Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xxiv, 77. ✓

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inveniri potest, et nisi quid tale est, percipi non potest? hoc si ita est, dicendum potius erat, non posse in hominem cadere sapientiam, quam sapientem nescire cur vivat, nescire quemadmodum vivat, nescire utrum vivat; postremo, quo perversius magisque delirum et insanum dici nihil potest, simul et sapientem esse, et ignorare sapientiam. Quid enim est durius, hominem non posse esse sapientem, an sapientem nescire sapientiam? Nihil hinc disputandum est, si res ipsa ita posita satis non est ad dijudicandum. Sed illud forte si diceretur, penitus homines a philosophando averterentur: nunc vero inducendi sunt sapientiae dulcissimo ac sanctissimo nomine, ut cum contrita aetate nihil didicerint, postea te summis execrationibus prosequantur, quem relictis saltem voluptatibus corporis, ad animi tormenta sunt secuti.

20. Sed videamus per quem potius a philosophia deterreantur. Per eumne qui dixerit: Audi, amice; philosophia non ipsa sapientia, sed studium sapientiae vocatur, ad quam te si contuleris, non quidem dum hic vivis sapiens eris (est enim apud Deum sapientia, nec provenire homini potest), sed cum te tali studio satis exercueris atque mundaveris, animus tuus ea post hanc vitam, id est, cum homo esse desieris, facile perfruetur? An per eum qui dixerit: Venite, mortales, ad philosophiam; magnus hic fructus est: quid enim homini sapientia charius? venite igitur ut sapientes sitis, et sapientiam nesciatis? Non, inquit, a me ita

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a thing cannot be understood unless it be of this character, how could that fact have failed to trouble Zeno himself? If such is the case, then it were more logical to say that wisdom cannot fall to the lot of man, rather than say that a wise man does not know why he is living, or how he is living, or whether he is living, or—and it would be impossible to say anything more flagrantly senseless and silly than this—that he can be at the same time wise, and ignorant of wisdom. Truly, which is the harder to conceive: that a man cannot be wise, or that a wise man does not know wisdom? When the question is propounded in that way, if it does not furnish its own answer, there is no use in discussing it further. But, then, if it were propounded that way, perhaps men would become wholly averse to the study of philosophy, whereas they ought now to be lured by that most sweet and holy name of wisdom—yes, lured in such a manner that in later life, because they will have learned nothing in their wasted youth, they will vent the most violent execrations on you; for, when they had abandoned at least the pleasures of the flesh, you led them unto torments of the mind.

20. But through whom are they the more deterred from philosophy? Let us see. Is it through the man who will say: "Listen, friend. It is not wisdom itself that is called philosophy: it is the zeal for wisdom. And even if you apply yourself to it, you will not be wise as long as you are living here below; for wisdom is with God, and it cannot reach man. But when you will have sufficiently exercised and cleansed yourself with this kind of study, then—after this present life, or, in other words, when you will have ceased to be a man—your mind will easily enjoy wisdom?" Or is it through the man who will say this: "Mortal men, come to philosophy; for it offers great advantage. What is more dear to a man than wisdom? Come, therefore, that you may be wise without knowing wisdom?" "But," says

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dicetur. Hoc est decipere, nam nihil aliud apud te invenietur. Ita fit ut si hoc dixeris, fugiant tanquam insanum; si alio modo ad hoc adduxeris, facias insanos. Sed credamus, propter utramque sententiam aequè homines nolle philosophari. Si aliquid philosophiae perniciosum Zenonis definitio dicere cogebat, mi homo, idne homini dicendum fuit, unde se doleret; an id, unde te derideret?

21. Tamen quod Zeno definivit, quantum stulti possumus, discutiamus. Id visum ait posse comprehendere, quod sic appareret, ut falsum apparere non posset. Manifestum est, nihil aliud in perceptionem venire. Hoc et ego, inquit Archesilas, video, et hoc ipso doceo nihil percipi. Non enim tale aliquid inveniri potest. Fortasse abs te, atque ab aliis stultis: at a sapiente cur non potest? Quanquam et ipsi stulto nihil responderi posse arbitror, si tibi dicat ut illo memorabili acumine tuo hanc ipsam Zenonis definitionem refellas, et ostendas eam etiam falsam esse posse: quod si non potueris, hanc ipsam quam percipias habes; si autem refelleris, unde a percipiendo impediaris non habes. Ego eam refelli posse non video, et omnino verissimam judico. Itaque cum eam scio, quamvis sim stultus, nonnihil scio. Sed fac illam cedere versutiae tuae. Utar complexione securissima. Aut enim vera est, aut falsa: si vera, bene teneo; si falsa, potest aliquid percipi, etiamsi habeat com-

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he, "I shall not express it that way." Then, you are deceiving; for nothing else will be found in your sect. And if you would express it that way, they would shun you as a madman; and if you would entice them in any other way, you would make madmen out of them. But let us suppose that equally on account of the one theory and the other, men are unwilling to devote themselves to philosophy. Even then, my dear friend, if Zeno's definition compelled the saying of something destructive to philosophy, ought a man to be told something that would induce him to bewail himself, or something that would make him laugh at you?

21. However, insofar as our folly permits it, let us discuss what Zeno has defined. He says that a sense datum can be understood, if it reveals itself with such marks as a false thing could not have.³ It is clear that nothing else can be understood. "But," says Arcesilas, "I also see that. And precisely because I see it, I teach that nothing is understood; for it is impossible to find anything of that character." Perhaps it is impossible for you and for other fools. But why is it impossible for a wise man? Of course, if this fool should ask you to confute Zeno's definition, and to show that even that definition can be false, I am convinced that, notwithstanding your remarkable acumen, his challenge could not be successfully met. However, if you cannot confute that definition, then you have something which you can understand, namely, that definition itself; and if you can confute it, then you no longer have it as an obstacle to your understanding something. I myself do not see that it can be confuted: in fact, I judge it to be entirely true. Therefore, since I know that definition—although I am unwise—I know something. But suppose that it yields to your acumen. I shall now use a very sound dilemma: That definition is either true or false. If it is true, I understand it correctly; and if it is false, then there is something

3 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xxxiv, 112. ✕

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munia signa cum falso. Unde, inquit, potest? Verissime igitur Zeno definivit, nec ei quisquis vel in hoc consensit, erravit. An parvae laudis et sinceritatis definitionem putabimus, quae contra eos qui erant adversum perceptionem multa dicturi, cum designaret quale esset quod percipi posset, seipsam talem esse monstravit? Itaque comprehensibilibus rebus et definitio est, et exemplum. Utrum, ait, etiam ipsa vera sit nescio: sed quia est probabilis, ideo sequens eam ostendo nihil esse tale, quale illa expressit posse comprehendere. Ostendis fortasse praeter ipsam, et vides, ut arbitror, quid sequatur. Quod si etiam ejus incertus sumus, nec ita nos deserit scientia; scimus enim aut veram esse, aut falsam: non igitur nihil scimus. Quanquam nunquam efficiet ut ingratus sim, prorsus ego illam definitionem verissimam judico. Aut enim possunt percipi et falsa, quod vehementius Academici timent, et revera absurdum est; aut nec ea possunt, quae sunt falsis similia: unde illa definitio vera est. Sed jam caetera videamus.

X

22. Quamvis haec, nisi fallor, possint ad victoriam satis esse, non tamen fortasse ad victoriae satietatem. Duo sunt quae ab Academicis dicuntur, contra quae, ut valemus,

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which can be understood, even if it has marks in common with something that is false.⁴ How can it?" Arcesilas asks. Well, if it cannot, then Zeno has given a very true definition; and consequently, whoever agrees with him, is not in error. Shall we attribute but little worth and merit to a definition which—in opposition to those who would advance many arguments to show that nothing can be understood—designates the character of what can be understood, and also shows that it is itself of such a character? So, with respect to comprehensible things, it is at once a definition and an example. Arcesilas now says: "I do not know whether that definition is true, but I follow it because it is probable. And precisely because I am following it for that reason, I am showing that there is no such thing as what it pronounces capable of being understood." Perhaps you are showing that there is no such thing, except that definition itself; for I believe you see its implications. Even if we are uncertain about that definition, we are not entirely without knowledge regarding it; for even in that case, we know that it is either true or false. Therefore, we know something about it. Although it will never make me uneasy, yet I unreservedly regard that definition as entirely true; for, either false things can be known, or—and the Academics have a dread of this; and it is really absurd—things that resemble the false, cannot be known. Hence, it follows that this definition is true. But let us consider the rest of their system.

CHAPTER X

22. If I am not mistaken, those observations suffice for gaining the victory; but they are insufficient for a complete rout of the adversary. We resolved to contravene, to

4 Cicero, *Academ.*, lib. II, cc. xi, xxxv.

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venire instituimus: "Nihil posse percipi"; et, "Nulli rei debere assentiri." De assentiendo mox alias, nunc pauca de perceptione dicemus. Nihilne prorsus dicitis posse comprehendendi? Hic evigilavit Carneades: nam nemo istorum minus alte quam ille dormivit, et circumspexit rerum evidentiam. Itaque credo, secum ipse, ut fit, loquens: Ergone, ait, Carneades, dicturus es nescire te utrum homo sis, an formica? Aut de te Chrysippus triumphabit? Dicamus ea nos nescire quae inter philosophos inquiruntur; caetera ad nos non pertinere, ut si in luce titubavero quotidiana et vulgari, ad illas imperitorum tenebras provocem, ubi soli quidam divini oculi vident: qui me etiam si palpitantem atque cadentem aspexerint, caecis prodere nequeant, praesertim arrogantibus, et quos doceri aliquid pudeat. Laute quidem, o graeca industria, succincta et parata procedis; sed non respicis illam definitionem et inventum esse philosophi, et in vestibulo philosophiae fixam atque fundatam. Quam si succidere tentabis, rediet bipennis in crura: illa enim labefactata, non solum potest aliquid percipi, sed etiam id potest quod simillimum falso est, si eam non audebis evertere. Est enim latibulum tuum unde in incautos transire cupientes vehemens erumpis atque exsilis: aliquis te Hercules in tua spelunca tanquam semihominem Cacum¹ suffocabit, et ejusdem molibus opprimet, docens

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the best of our ability, the two aphorisms of the Academics, namely, "that nothing can be perceived," and "that assent ought not to be given to anything."¹ As regards the latter, more anon; but we shall at once make a few observations on the former. Do you say that absolutely nothing can be perceived? At this point, Carneades awoke from slumber—none of those men dozed more lightly than Carneades—and carefully examined the evidence of reality. I believe that then—soliloquizing, as men sometimes do—he asked himself: "Now, Carneades, are you really going to say that you do not know whether you are a man or an insect? Or is Chrysippus² going to triumph over you? Well, let us say that the things we do not know, are those things which philosophers investigate; and that the other things are of no concern to us. Then, if I stumble in the ordinary everyday light, I can take refuge in that which is a region of darkness for the inerudite—a region where only certain godlike eyes can see. And if they see me tottering and falling, they cannot reveal it to the blind—especially to the arrogant and those who are too proud to be taught anything." O, Grecian craftiness, you come forth neatly girded and equipped; but you overlook the fact that this definition is itself the invention of philosophy. And if you attempt to chop it, the double-edged axe will strike back against your shins; for if that definition is weakened, not only can something be understood, but also—unless you venture to remove it completely—one can understand a thing that is very similar to something false. That definition is your lurking-place, from which you rush forth furiously, and spring upon unwary passers-by. But just as Hercules strangled the half-wild Cacus in the latter's cave, and crushed him beneath its ruins,³ so, too, will some one

¹ Cf. *ibid.*, II, xviii, 59.

² The Stoic who is said to have written more than seven hundred treatises. Against the Academics, he defended the validity of sense perception. (Cf. *ibid.*, II, xxiv, 75).

³ Virgil, *Aeneid*, Bk. VIII, vv. 194 sqq.

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aliquid esse in philosophia quod tanquam simile falso incertum abs te fieri non possit. Certe ad alia properabam; hoc quisquis urget, te ipsum, Carneades, magna afficit contumelia, quem a me veluti mortuum putat ubicumque aut undecumque posse superari. Si autem non putat, immisericors est, qui me passim deserere praesidia et tecum in campo certare cogit: in quem descendere cum coepissem, solo tuo nomine territus pedem retuli, et de superiore loco nescio quid jaculatus sum, quod utrum ad te pervenerit, vel quid egerit, viderint sub quorum examine dimicamus. Sed quid metuo ineptus? Si bene memini, mortuus es, nec jam pro sepulcro tuo jure pugnat Alypius: facile me contra umbram tuam Deus adjuvabit.

23. Nihil ais in philosophia posse percipi. Et ut orationem tuam large lateque diffundas, arripis rixas, dissensionesque philosophorum, et eas tibi contra illos arma ministrare arbitraris. Quomodo enim inter Democritum et superiores physicos de uno mundo, et innumerabilibus litem dijudicabimus, cum inter ipsum haeredemque ejus Epicurum concordia manere nequiverit? Nam iste luxuriosus cum atomos quasi ancillulas suas, id est corpuscula quae in tenebris laetus amplectitur, non tenere viam suam, sed in alienos limites passim sponte declinare permittit; totum patrimonium etiam per jurgia dissipavit. Hoc vero nihil ad

1 Undecim mss. *semihominem suffocabit*, omisso nomine *Cacum*.

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strangle and crush you, while he teaches that there is in philosophy something which you cannot render doubtful by showing that it is similar to something false. Of course, I was hastening on to other points. But, whoever would urge me to do that now, would cast great reproach on you, Carneades; for he would be considering you as no more capable than a dead man against my assaults anywhere and from any angle. On the other hand, whoever does not think this, is merciless if he forces me to abandon the ramparts everywhere, and to engage in combat with you on the plain. When I had begun to descend to combat, your name alone filled me with terror; and I at once retreated. But I hurled some kind of missile from the heights. Whether it reached you, or what effect it produced—that is something to be decided by those under whose scrutiny we are now contending. Yet, although I am incompetent, why should I be afraid? If I remember correctly, Carneades, you are dead. And Alypius is no longer rightfully contending as proxy for your corpse. God will readily give me aid against your ghost.

23. You say that in philosophy nothing can be understood. And in order to spread your utterance far and wide, you ridicule the quarrels and dissensions of philosophers. And you think that those quarrels and dissensions supply you with arms against the philosophers themselves.⁴ How, for instance, are we going to adjudicate the contest between Democritus and the earlier cosmologists as to the oneness or the incalculable multiplicity of the world, inasmuch as it was impossible to preserve agreement between Democritus himself and his heir, Epicurus? That voluptuary was glad to grasp atoms in the darkness, and to make those little bodies his handmaids; but he dissipated his entire patrimony through litigation when he allowed them to deviate from their respective proper courses, and to

⁴ Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xli, 127-8. ✓

me attinet. Si enim ad sapientiam pertinet horum aliquid scire, id non potest latere sapientem. Si autem aliud quidam est sapientia;² illam scit sapiens, ista contemnit. Tamen ego qui longe adhuc absum vel a vicinitate sapientis, in istis physicis nonnihil scio. Certum enim habeo, aut unum esse mundum, aut non unum; et si non unum, aut finiti numeri, aut infiniti. Istam sententiam Carneades falsae esse similem doceat. Item scio mundum istum nostrum, aut natura corporum, aut aliqua providentia sic esse dispositum; eumque aut semper fuisse et fore, aut coepisse esse minime desitutum; aut ortum ex tempore non habere, sed habiturum esse finem; aut et manere coepisse, et non perpetuo esse mansurum: et innumerabilia physica hoc modo novi. Vera enim ista sunt disjuncta, nec similitudine aliqua falsi ea potest quisquam confundere. Sed assume aliquid, ait Academicus. Nolo: nam hoc est dicere, Relinque quod scis, dic quod nescis. Sed pendet sententia. Melius certe pendet quam cadit: nempe plana est;³ nempe jam potest aut falsa, aut vera nominari. Hanc ergo me scire dico. Tu qui nec ad philosophiam pertinere ista negas, et eorum sciri nihil posse asseris, ostende me ista nescire: dic istas disjunctiones aut

2 Ita mss. At edd. *sapientiam illam*.

3 Septem mss. *plena est*.

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diverge capriciously into one another's paths.⁵ Of course, this is no affair of mine; but if it pertains to wisdom to know anything about those matters, a wise man cannot be unaware of that fact. I myself am as yet far from being even almost wise. Nevertheless, I know something about those matters of cosmology; for I am certain that either there is only one world or there are more worlds than one. I am likewise certain that if there are more worlds than one, their number is either finite or infinite. Carneades would teach that this notion resembles a false one. Furthermore, I know for certain that this world of ours has its present arrangement either from the nature of bodies or from a foresight of some kind. I am also certain that either it always was and always will be, or it had a beginning and will never end, or it existed before time and will have an end, or it had a beginning and will not last forever.⁶ And I have the same kind of knowledge with regard to countless cosmological problems; for those disjunctives are true, and no one can confuse them with any likeness to falsity. "Now," says the Academic, "assume the truth of either member of the disjunction." I refuse to do that; for it is the same as saying: "Quit what you know, and say what you know not." "But," says he, "your notion is now hanging in suspense." Very well: better hanging in suspense than falling to the ground. While it is hanging, it is at least in plain view; and it can be pronounced either true or false. And because I know that it is either true or false, I say that I know it as a proposition. Now, since you do not deny that these matters pertain to philosophy, and since you nevertheless maintain that nothing can be known about them, I ask you to show that I do not know them. In other words, say either that these disjunctives are false or that they have something in common with falsity—some

⁵ *Id.*, *ibid.*, I, ii, 6; *De fin.*, I, vi, 17; *De nat. deorum*, I, xxv, 69; *De fato*, x, 21 sq.

⁶ *Id.*, *De nat. deorum*, I, viii, 19; *Academ.* II, xxxviii, 119.

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falsas esse, aut aliquid commune habere cum falso, per quod discerni omnino non possint.

XI

24. Unde, inquit, scis esse istum mundum, si sensus falluntur? Nunquam rationes vestrae ita vim sensuum refellere potuerunt, ut convinceretis nobis nihil videri: nec omnino ausi estis aliquando ista tentare; sed posse aliud esse ac videtur, vehementer persuadere incubuistis. Ego itaque hoc totum, quaecumque est quod nos continet, atque alit; hoc, inquam, quod oculis meis apparet, a meque sentitur habere terram et coelum, aut quasi terram, et quasi coelum, mundum voco. Si dicis nihil mihi videri, nunquam errabo. Is enim errat, qui quod sibi videtur, temere probat. Posse enim falsum videri a sentientibus dicitis, nihil videri non dicitis. Prorsus enim omnis disputationis causa tolletur, ubi regnare vos libet, si non solum nihil scimus, sed etiam nihil nobis videtur. Si autem hoc quod mihi videtur negas mundum esse, de nomine controversiam facis, cum id a me dixerim mundum vocari.

25. Etiamne, inquires, si dormis, mundus est iste quem vides? Jam dictum est, quidquid tale mihi videtur, mundum appello. Sed si eum solum placet mundum vocare, qui videtur a vigilantibus vel etiam a sanis; illud con-

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characteristic which renders them absolutely indistinguishable from something that is false.

CHAPTER XI

24. "But," says he, "if the senses are deceptive, how do you know that this world exists?"¹ Your reasons will never be able to refute the testimony of the senses to such extent as to convince us that nothing is perceived by us. In fact, you have never ventured to try that; but you have strenuously exerted yourself to convince us that a thing can be something other than what it seems to be. So, by the term, *world*, I mean this totality which surrounds us and sustains us. Whatever its nature may be, I apply the term, *world*, to that which is present to my eyes, and which I see to be holding the earth and the heavens, or the *quasi* earth and the *quasi* heavens. If you say that nothing appears to me, then I shall never be in error: the man that is in error, is the man who rashly accepts as true whatever appears to him. Indeed you yourselves say that to sentient beings, a false thing can appear to be true; but you do not say that nothing can so appear to them. You are anxious to gain a victory in this dispute. But if we know nothing, and if nothing even appears to us as true, then the entire reason for our dispute will vanish. And if you maintain that what appears to me, is not a world, then you are disputing about words only; for I have said that I call it a world.

25. But you will ask me: "Is it the very same world that you are seeing, even if you are asleep?"² I have already said that I am using the term, *world*, to designate whatever appears as such to me. But if you think that the term ought to be restricted to that which appears to those who

1 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xxiv, 59.

2 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, cc. xv-xvi.

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tende, si potes, eos qui dormiunt ac furiunt, non in mundo furere atque dormire. Quamobrem hoc dico, istam totam corporum molem atque machinam in qua sumus, sive dormientes, sive furentes, sive vigilantes, sive sani, aut unam esse, aut non esse unam. Edissere, quomodo possit ista esse falsa sententia. Si enim dormio, fieri potest ut nihil dixerim; aut si etiam ore dormientis verba, ut solet, evaserunt, potest fieri ut non hic, non ita sedens, non istis audientibus dixerim: ut autem hoc falsum sit, non potest. Nec ego illud me percepisse dico, quod vigilem. Potes enim dicere, hoc mihi etiam dormienti videri potuisse; ideoque hoc potest esse falso simillimum. Si autem unus et sex mundi sunt; septem mundos esse, quoquo modo affectus sim, manifestum est, et id me scire non impudenter affirmo. Quare vel hanc connexionem, vel illas superius disjunctiones, doce somno aut furore aut vanitate sensuum posse esse falsas; et me, si expergefactus ista meminero, victum esse concedam. Credo enim jam satis liquere quae per somnium et dementiam falsa videantur, ea scilicet quae ad corporis sensus pertinent: nam ter terna novem esse, et quadratum intelligibilium numerorum, necesse est vel genere humano stertente sit verum. Quanquam etiam pro ipsis sensibus multa posse dici video, quae ab Academicis reprehensa non invenimus. Credo enim sensus non accusari, vel quod imaginationes falsas furentes patiuntur, vel quod falsa in somnis videmus. Si enim vera vigilantibus atque sanis

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are awake and of sound mind, then contend—if you can—that sleeping men and deranged men are not in this world while they are asleep or deranged.³ My only assertion is that this entire mass and frame of bodies in which we exist, is either a unit or not a unit; and that it is what it is, whether we be asleep or awake, deranged or of sound mind. Point out how this notion can be false. If I am now asleep, it is possible that I have said nothing at all; but if—as happens occasionally—words have escaped my lips during sleep, it is possible that I was not talking here, that I was not thus seated, and that I was not talking to these listeners. But in any case, it must be true that the world is what it is. Of course, I am not saying that I perceived the same thing that I would perceive if I were awake; but you can say that what I perceive when I am awake, could appear to me also when I am asleep. Therefore, it can be very similar to something false. However, if there are one world and six worlds, it is clear that there are seven worlds, no matter how I may be affected. And with all due modesty, I maintain that I know this. Then, show that either this dilemma or the aforesaid disjunctives can be false by reason of sleep or mental derangement or the unreality of sense perception. And then, if I remember it when I am awakened I shall admit that I am vanquished. But I regard it as already sufficiently plain that the things which are seen awry through sleep or derangement, are things that pertain to the bodily senses; for even if the whole human race were fast asleep, it would still be necessarily true that *three times three* are nine, and that this is the square of intelligible numbers. And furthermore, I see that on behalf of the senses, one could urge many arguments which we do not find reprehended by the Academics. In fact, I believe that the senses are not untrustworthy either because deranged persons suffer illusions, or because we see things wrongly when we are asleep. If the

3 *Id.*, *ibid.*, xv, 48.

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renuntiarunt; nihil ad eos, quid sibi animus dormientis insanientisque confingat.¹

26. Restat ut quaeratur, utrum cum ipsi renuntiant, verum renuntient. Age, si dicat Epicureus quispiam, nihil habeo quod de sensibus conquerar: injustum est enim ab eis exigere plusquam possunt; quidquid autem possunt videre oculi, verum vident. Ergone verum est quod de remo in aqua vident? Prorsus verum. Nam causa accedente quare ita videretur, si demersus unda remus rectus appareret, magis oculos meos falsae renuntiationis arguerem. Non enim viderent quod talibus existentibus causis videndum fuit. Quid multis opus est? Hoc de turrium motu, hoc de pinnulis avium, hoc de caeteris innumerabilibus dici potest. Ego tamen fallor, si assentiar, ait quispiam. Noli plus assentiri, quam ut ita tibi apparere persuadeas; et nulla deceptio est. Non enim video, quomodo refellat Academicus eum qui dicit: Hoc mihi candidum videri scio; hoc auditum meum delectari scio; hoc mihi jucunde olere scio; hoc mihi sapere dulciter scio; hoc mihi esse frigidum scio. Dic potius, utrum per se amarae sint oleastri frondes, quas caper tam pertinaciter appetit. O hominem improbum! nonne est caper ipse modestior? Nescio quales pecori sint, mihi tamen amarae sunt: quid quaeris amplius? Sed est fortasse aliquis etiam hominum, cui non sint amarae. Tendisne in molestiam? Numquidnam ego amaras esse

1 Editio Par. *qui sibi animum . . . confingant.*

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senses correctly intimate things to the vigilant and the sane, it is no affair of theirs what the mind of a sleeping or an insane person may fancy for itself.⁴

26. Inquiry is still to be made as to whether the senses report the truth whenever they report anything. Well, suppose that some Epicurean would say: "I have no complaint to make about the senses; for it would be unfair to demand of them anything beyond their power. And whatever the eyes can see, they see that which is true." Therefore, as to what they see with regard to an oar in the water—is that true?⁵ It is absolutely true. In fact, since there is a special reason for the oar's appearing that way, I should rather accuse my eyes of deception if it appeared to be straight when it is dipped in the water; for, in that case, they would not be seeing what ought to be seen. But what is the need of many examples? The same can be said about the motion of towers, the wings of birds, and countless other things. "Nevertheless," says some one or other, "I am deceived if I give assent." Restrict your assent to the mere fact of your being convinced that it appears thus to you. Then there is no deception; for I do not see how even an Academic can refute a man who says: "I know that this appears white to me. I know that I am delighted by what I am hearing. I know that this smells pleasant to me. I know that this tastes sweet to me. I know that this feels cold to me."⁶ Tell me, rather, whether the oleaster leaves—for which a goat has a persistent appetite—are bitter *per se*. O, shameless man! Is not the goat more moderate? I know not how the oleaster leaves may be for flocks and herds; but as to myself, they are bitter. What more do you wish to know? And perhaps there is even some man for whom they are not bitter. Are you contending

4 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xxvii, 88; vii, 19-22.

5 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, cc. vii, xxv.

6 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xxiv, 76.

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omnibus dixi? mihi dixi, et hoc non semper affirmo. Quid si enim alias alia causa, nunc dulce quidpiam, nunc amarum in ore sentiatur? Illud dico, posse hominem cum aliquid gustat, bona fide jurare, se scire palato suo illud suave esse, vel contra, nec ulla calumnia graeca ab ista scientia posse deduci. Quis enim tam impudens sit, qui mihi cum delectatione aliquid ligurienti dicat: Fortasse non gustas, sed hoc somnium est? Numquidnam resisto? Sed me tamen illud in somnis etiam delectaret. Quare illud quod me scire dixi, nulla confundit similitudo falsorum. Et Epicureus, vel Cyrenaici et alia multa fortasse pro sensibus dicant, contra quae nihil dictum esse ab Academicis accepi. Sed quid ad me? Si volunt ista, et si possunt, etiam me favente rescindant. Quidquid enim contra sensus ab eis disputatur, non contra omnes philosophos valet. Sunt enim qui ista omnia, quae corporis sensu accipit animus, opinionem posse gignere confitentur, scientiam vero negant. Quam tamen volunt intelligentia contineri, remotamque a sensibus in mente vivere. Et forte in eorum numero est sapiens ille quem quaerimus. Sed de hoc alias. Nunc ad reliqua pergamus quae propter ista quae jam dicta sunt, paucis, nisi fallor, explicabimus.

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for the sake of annoyance? Have I said that they are bitter for everybody? I have said that they are bitter for me; but I do not say that they will always be so. What, if at different times and for diverse reasons, something be found to taste sweet at one time, and bitter on some other occasion? This is what I say: that when a man tastes something, he can in good faith swear that it is sweet to his palate or that it is not; and that by no Greek sophistry can he be beguiled out of this knowledge. If I am relishing the taste of something, who would be so brazen as to say to me: "Perhaps you are not tasting it: it may be only a dream?" Would I discontinue? Why, that would afford me pleasure even in a dream. Wherefore, no resemblance to falsity can confuse what I have said that I know. Perhaps an Epicurean or the Cyrenaics would make far greater claims for the senses. And I have heard that nothing has been said in rebuttal by the Academics.⁷ But what is that to me? Let the Academics refute those claims if—even with my aid—they are able and willing to do so; for their arguments against the senses, do not hold against all philosophers. There are some philosophers who profess that an opinion can be engendered by what the mind receives through a bodily sense, but maintain that no certain knowledge [*scientia*] can be thus engendered. They hold that such knowledge is contained in the intelligence, far remote from the senses.⁸ And perhaps it is among those philosophers that we shall find the wise man we are looking for.⁹ But we shall discuss that later. Let us now proceed to the other points. In view of what has been already said, we shall—if I am not mistaken—exhaust those remaining points in a few words.

7 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, vii, 19-22.

8 Plato's theory, See ch. 17, no. 37. Cf. Cicero, *ibid.*, II, xlvi, 142.

9 He was convinced of that. Cf. book III, ch. 20, no. 43. See note 10, page 256.

XII

27. Quid enim de moribus inquirentem vel juvat vel impedit corporis sensus? Nisi vero illos ipsos qui summum hominis bonum in voluptate posuere, nihil impedit aut columbae collum, aut vox incerta, aut græve pondus homini quod camelis leve est, aut alia sexcenta, quominus dicant eo quo delectantur delectari se scire, vel eo quo offenduntur offendi (quod refelli posse non video); eum commovebunt qui finem boni mente complectitur. Quid horum tu eligis? Si quid mihi videatur, quaeris; in mente arbitror esse summum hominis bonum.² Sed nunc de scientia quaerimus. Ergo interroga sapientem, qui non potest ignorare sapientiam: mihi tamen tardo illi atque stulto licet interim scire, boni humani finem, in quo inhabitet beata vita, aut nullum esse, aut in animo esse, aut in corpore, aut in utroque. Hoc me, si potes, nescire convince; quod notissimae illae vestrae rationes nullo modo faciunt. Quod si non potes, non enim reperies cui falso simile sit, egone concludere dubitabo, recte mihi videri scire sapientem quidquid in philosophia verum est, cum ego inde tam multa vera cognoverim?

2 *Retract.*, lib. I, cap. I, n. 4.

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CHAPTER XII

27. Now, to what extent does a bodily sense help or hinder a man who is in search of moral principles? But if, even in the case of those who posit man's supreme good in pleasure, neither the dove's neck nor the uncertain voice nor the burden that is both heavy and light with regard to men and to camels respectively¹—if neither these nor six hundred other things prevent those men from saying that by the mere fact of their being delighted or displeased, they know that they are being delighted or displeased, neither will they occasion any difficulty for one who confines man's supreme good within the limits of the mind.² Which of those opinions do you embrace? If you ask for my opinion, I judge that man's supreme good is in the mind.³ At present, however, we are inquiring about knowledge. Accordingly, seek information from a wise man; for he cannot be ignorant of wisdom. But even to me, although I am a dullard and unwise, it is granted meanwhile to know that either there is no supreme good of man—where life's happiness abides—or it is either in the mind or in the body, or in both. Convince me, if you can, that I do not know this; but of a certainty, your stock arguments do not convince me of it. And if you cannot do it—because you will be unable to find any falsity which it resembles—shall I hesitate to conclude that, since I myself already know so many truths in philosophy, the wise man rightly seems to me to know everything in it that is true?

1 According to Cicero, these and several other examples of apparent sense-deception were proposed and feebly refuted by Chrysippus, the Stoic. Carneades developed them further, and used them ingeniously but ineffectively against the Stoics, and the Epicureans, who "posit man's supreme good in pleasure." (Cf. *Academ.* II, xxvii, 87-8).

2 Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xlii, 129; *De fin.*, II, iii sq; III, ix, 30.

3 *Retract.*, I, i, 4; Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xlii, 129.

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28. Sed metuit fortasse ne summum bonum eligat dormiens. Nihil periculi est: cum evigilaverit, repudiabit si displicet, tenebit si placet. Quis enim eum recte vituperabit quod falsum vidit in somnis? Aut fortasse illud formidabit, ne dormiens amittat sapientiam, si pro veris falsa probaverit? Hoc jam ne dormiens quidem audet somniare, ut sapientem vigilantem vocet, neget si dormiat. Haec etiam de furore dici possunt: sed in alia festinat oratio. Haec tamen sine conclusione securissima non relinquo. Aut enim amittitur furore sapientia, et jam non erit sapiens, quem verum ignorare clamatis: aut scientia ejus manet in intellectu, etiamsi pars animi caetera id quod accepit a sensibus velut in somnis imaginetur.

XIII

29. Restat dialectica, quam certe sapiens bene novit, nec falsum scire quisquam potest. Si vero eam nescit, non pertinet ad sapientiam ejus cognitio, sine qua esse sapiens potuit; et superfluo utrum vera sit, possitve percipi, quaerimus. Hic fortasse aliquis mihi dicat: Soles prodere tu stulte, quid noveris: an de dialectica nihil scire potuisti?

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28. But perhaps he fears that he will choose his supreme good while he is asleep.⁴ There is nothing dangerous in that; for if he disapproves it when he awakes, he will reject it, and he will retain it if he likes it. And who will rightly censure him for having seen something false while he was asleep? But perhaps he fears that he will lose his wisdom, if he approves something false while he is asleep? Why, not even a sleeping man would dare to dream such a thing as to say that some one is wise while he is awake, but unwise while he is asleep. These same observations could be made also with regard to mental derangement; but our discourse is hastening on to other matters. However, I am not quitting this topic without leaving a very safe conclusion. It is this: either wisdom is lost by derangement, or knowledge [*scientia*] remains in a man's intellect even though the other part of his mind be picturing the sense datum as if it were receiving it in a dream; but if wisdom is lost by derangement, then he will not be a wise man when you proclaim him to be ignorant of truth.

4 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xvii, 52. ✓

CHAPTER XIII

29. Dialectic remains to be discussed.¹ Unquestionably, a wise man has a thorough knowledge of it; and no man can know something that is false.² On the other hand, however, if the wise man does not know dialectic, then a knowledge of it does not pertain to wisdom; for he was able to be wise without such knowledge. And in that case, we are needlessly inquiring whether it is true or whether it can be understood. And now, some one may say to me: "You have the habit of foolishly displaying your knowl-

1 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, cc. xxviii - xxx. ✓

2 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xiii, 40.

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Ego vero plura quam de quavis parte philosophiae. Nam primo omnes illas propositiones, quibus supra usus sum, veras esse ista me docuit. Deinde per istam novi alia multa vera. Sed quam multa sint, numerate, si potestis. Si quatuor in mundo elementa sunt, non sunt quinque. Si sol unus est, non sunt duo. Non potest una anima et mori et esse immortalis. Non potest homo simul et beatus, et miser esse. Non hic et sol lucet, et nox est. Aut vigilamus nunc, aut dormimus. Aut corpus est, quod mihi videre videor, aut non est corpus. Haec et alia multa, quae commemorare longissimum est, per istam didici vera esse, quoquo modo sese habeant sensus nostri, in se ipsa vera. Docuit me,¹ si cujus eorum quae per connexionem modo proposui pars antecedens assumpta fuerit, trahere necessario id quod annexum est. Ea vero quae per repugnantiam vel disjunctionem a me sunt enuntiata, hanc habere naturam, ut cum auferuntur caetera, sive unum, sive plura sint, restet aliquid quod eorum ablatione firmetur. Docuit etiam me, cum de re constat, propter quam verba dicuntur, de verbis non debere contendere: et quisquis id faciat, si imperitia faciat, docendum esse; si malitia, deserendum: si doceri non potest, monendum ut aliquid aliud potius agat, quam tempus in superfluis operamque consumat; si non obtemperat, negligendum. De captiosis autem atque fallacibus ratiunculis breve praeceptum est: si male concedendo inferuntur, ad

1 Lov. *in se. Ipsa vero docuit me.*

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edge. Have you not been able to know anything about dialectic?" Truly, I know more about dialectic than about any other part of philosophy. In the first place, as regards all the propositions that I have enunciated just now, it is dialectic that has taught me that they are true. And furthermore, through it I have learned many other truths as well. Estimate their number, if you can. If the elements in the world are four, they are not five. If there is but one sun, there are not two. The same soul cannot both die and be immortal. A man cannot be at the same time happy and miserable. It cannot be nighttime while the sun is shining. At the present moment we are either asleep or awake. What I think I see, either is or is not a body. Through dialectic I have learned that these and many other things—which it would be very tedious to enumerate—are true, true in themselves, howsoever our senses may be affected. And with regard to the matters which I have propounded in the form of a condition, dialectic has taught me that if the antecedent of any one of them is assumed, it necessarily entails the assumption of the consequent. But with regard to the propositions expressed in the manner of contrariety or disjunction, it has shown their nature to be such that, if one or several parts are removed by negation, there remains something that is confirmed by that removal. Dialectic has also taught me that there ought to be no dispute regarding mere words whenever there is agreement on the matter which they are intended to signify, since words are used merely for the sake of signifying; that whoever disputes on mere words in such a contingency, is to be shunned if he does it through malice; that he is to be taught, if he does it through ignorance; that if he cannot be taught, he ought to be admonished to do something else, rather than waste time and effort on needless matters; and that if he does not comply, he is to be entirely disregarded. As to arguments that are petty, captious and fallacious, there is a concise maxim: If they are occasioned

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ea quae concessa sunt esse redeundum. Si verum falsum-que in una conclusione configunt, accipiendum inde quod intelligitur, quod explicari non potest relinquendum. Si autem modus in aliquibus rebus latet penitus hominem, scientiam ejus non esse quaerendam. Haec quidem habeo a dialectica, et alia multa quae commemorare non est necesse. Neque enim debeo ingratus existere. Verum ille sapiens aut haec negligit, aut si profecto dialectica ipsa scientia veritatis est, sic illam novit ut istorum mendacissimam calumniam: "Si verum est, falsum est; si falsum est, verum est": contemnendo, et non miserando fame enecet.² Haec de perceptione satis esse propterea puto, quia de assentiendo cum dicere coepero, tota ibi rursum causa versabitur.

2 Am. Er. et Lov. omittunt *fame*. Mss. quatuor, *et non miseranda fama*. Sed verius alii novem, *et non miserando fame enecet*: quibus accedit Bad.

XIV

30. Jam ergo ad eam partem veniamus, in qua dubitare adhuc videtur Alypius. Et primo idipsum perspiciamus quale sit, quod te acutissime atque cautissime movet. Nam si tot tantisque rationibus roboratam¹ (hoc enim dixisti) Academicorum sententiam, qua eis placuit nihil scire sapientem, hoc tuum labefactat inventum, quo cogimur confiteri multo esse probabilius, sapientem scire sapientiam; magis est assensio cohibenda. Hoc enim ipso ostenditur nihil quamlibet copiosissimis subtilissimisque argumentis posse suaderi, cui non ex parte contraria, si adsit ingenium, non minus acriter, vel fortasse acrius resistatur. Eo fit, ut

1 Lov. *roboratum*. At alii cdd. *roboratam*.

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by an unwarranted concession, the conceded points ought to be again discussed; if truth and falsity are in conflict in the same conclusion, we are to accept what we understand, and to reject the rest. But if in some matters the criterion lies completely hidden from man, a knowledge of that criterion is not to be sought.³ It is from dialectic that I have learned all this, as well as a great deal more that need not be mentioned now. Nor ought I to be uneasy; for the wise man neglects all this entirely unless dialectic is itself the science of the truth. But if it is such a science, then he knows that science so well that, by sheer pitiless disregard, he starves to death that most captious sophism of theirs: "If it is true, it is false; and if it is false, it is true." I think that we have now spoken at sufficient length on the topic of "perceiving"; for the entire matter will be sifted again when I shall have begun to discuss the act of assenting.

3 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xxx, 95.

CHAPTER XIV

30. Now, let us come at once to that point wherein Alypius seems to be still in doubt. And first of all, Alypius, let us attentively examine the nature of that which so keenly impresses you, and makes you so cautious. You have said that the Academics' theory—the theory that a wise man knows nothing—is strengthened by many cogent arguments. But you have just now discovered that it is far more probable that he knows wisdom. Now, if this new discovery of yours weakens that theory of the Academics, it follows that assent is merely to be withheld. This makes it very clear that nothing can be advocated—by whatsoever keen and copious arguments—which cannot be controverted just as keenly or perhaps even more keenly, unless the op-

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cum sit victus Academicus, vicerit. O utinam vincatur! nunquam efficiet quavis arte Pelasga, ut simul a me victus victorque discedat. Certe nihil aliud inveniatur quod adversum ista dici possit, et ultro me victum esse profiteor. Non enim de gloria comparanda, sed de invenienda veritate tractamus. Mihi satis est, quoquo modo molem istam transcendere, quae intransitibus ad philosophiam sese opponit, et nescio quibus receptaculis tenebrascens² talem esse philosophiam totam minatur, nihilque in ea lucis inventum iri sperare permittit. Quid autem amplius desiderem, nihil habeo, si jam probabile est nonnihil scire sapientem. Non enim alia causa veri simile videbatur eum assensionem sustinere debere, nisi quia erat veri simile nihil posse comprehendere. Quo sublato, percipit enim sapiens vel ipsam ut jam conceditur sapientiam, nulla jam causa remanebit cur non assentiatur sapiens vel ipsi sapientiae. Est enim sine dubitatione monstrosius sapientem non approbare sapientiam, quam sapientem nescire sapientiam.

31. Nam quaeso, paululum quasi ante oculos tale spectaculum constituamus, si possumus, rixam quamdam sapientis et sapientiae. Quid aliud dicit sapientia, quam se esse sapientiam? At contra iste, Non credo, inquit. Quis ait sapientiae: Non credo esse sapientiam? quis, nisi is cum quo illa loqui potuit, et in quo habitare dignata est, scilicet sapiens? Ite nunc, et me quaerite, qui cum Academicis

2 Par. Er. Ven. *tenebras tegens.*

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ponent lacks ingenuity. Hence it happens that an Academic wins, even when he is vanquished. And oh that he be vanquished! By no Pelasgic artifice¹ will he ever bring it to pass that he be both victor and vanquished when he departs from me. Of course, if we could find nothing further to say against those sophisms, I would freely admit that I am vanquished; for we are discoursing, not for the sake of gaining glory, but for the purpose of finding the truth. And it is a matter of indifference to me how I cross that cliff which confronts those who would enter the region of philosophy²—the cliff whose darkening defiles portend an equally deep darkness throughout the entire realm of philosophy, and preclude all hope of finding any light whatever within its borders. But I have nothing further to desire just now, if it is already probable that a wise man knows something; for our only reason for believing that it was truth-like for him to withhold assent, was the fact that it seemed truth-like that nothing could be understood. That assumption is now disclaimed; for it is conceded that a wise man understands wisdom at least. Therefore, there is no reason why he should not give assent to wisdom at least; for it is unquestionably more monstrous for a wise man not to approve wisdom than not to know wisdom.

31. Now, if you please, let us try to visualize for a moment such a spectacle as a quarrel of some kind between a wise man and wisdom. The only claim that wisdom makes, is that she is wisdom. But her opponent says, "I do not believe it." Now, who is it that says to wisdom, "I do not believe there is wisdom?" Who, indeed, but a man with whom wisdom has been able to converse, and with whom she has deigned to abide—in a word, a wise man? Now, try to find me as the one who is contending

¹ Virgil, *Aeneid*, II, 152.

² Cf. *De beata vita*, no. 3.

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pugnem: habetis jam novum certamen, sapiens et sapientia secum pugnant. Sapiens non vult consentire sapientiae, ego vobiscum securus exspecto. Quis enim non credat invictam esse sapientiam? Tamen nos aliqua complexione muniamus. Aut enim in hoc certamine Academicus vincet sapientiam; et a me vincetur, quia non erit sapiens: aut ab ea superabitur; et sapientem sapientiae consentire docēbimus. Aut igitur sapiens Academicus non est, aut nonnulli rei sapiens assentietur: nisi forte quem dicere puduit sapientem nescire sapientiam, sapientem non consentire sapientiae dicere non pudebit. At si jam veri simile est cadere in sapientem vel ipsius sapientiae perceptionem, et nulla causa est, cur non ei quod potest percipi assentiat; video quod volebam esse veri simile, sapientem scilicet assensurum esse sapientiae. Si quaeres ubi inveniatur ipsam sapientiam; respondebo, In semetipso. Si dicis eum nescire quod habeat, redis ad illud absurdum, sapientem nescire sapientiam. Si sapientem ipsum negas posse inveniri; non jam cum Academicis, sed tecum, quisquis hoc sentis, sermone alio disseremus. Illi enim cum haec disputant, de sapiente profecto disputant. Clamat Cicero, seipsum magnum esse opinatorem, sed de sapiente se quaerere. Quod si adhuc vos, adolescentes, ignotum habetis, certe in Hortensio legistis: "Si igitur nec certi est quidquam, nec

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against the Academics! Why, you have indeed a novel contention here: a wise man and wisdom are in mutual combat: the wise man is in disagreement with wisdom. And, like yourself, I am calmly awaiting the outcome; for who would not believe that wisdom is invincible? Nevertheless, let us fortify our own position with a dilemma of some kind: In this contest, either the Academic will vanquish wisdom, or he will be vanquished by her. In the first case, he will then be vanquished by me, because he will not be a wise man. In the other case, we shall teach that a wise man gives assent to wisdom. Therefore, either the Academic is not a wise man, or a wise man will give assent to something—unless, of course, the man who was ashamed to say that a wise man is ignorant of wisdom,³ will not be ashamed to say that a wise man disagrees with wisdom. But if it now seems true that a wise man can reach an understanding of wisdom, it must also seem true that he will give assent to wisdom; for surely there is no reason why we ought to refuse assent to what can be understood. So, I see that my contention seems true—the contention that a wise man will give assent to wisdom. And if you ask me where he can find wisdom, I shall answer, “He will find it within himself.” If you say that he is unaware of its presence within him, you are going back to that same absurdity, namely, that a wise man is ignorant of wisdom. And if you maintain that a wise man cannot be found, then we shall have a new dispute with you—whoever you are—who hold that view. But this new dispute will not be with the Academics; for whenever they debate this point, they straightway assume the existence of a wise man. Cicero admits that he himself is very much given to forming opinions, but he says that he is inquiring as to what a wise man does.⁴ And if you, boys, are still unaware of this, you have at least read in his *Hortensius*: “Therefore, if

³ *Viz.* Alpius. Cf. chapter V.

⁴ *Acad.* II, xx, 66.

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opinari sapientis est; nihil unquam sapiens approbabit.” Unde manifestum est eos de sapiente illis suis disputationibus, contra quas nitimur, quaerere.

32. Ergo arbitror ego sapienti certam esse sapientiam, id est sapientem percepisse sapientiam; et ob hoc eum non opinari, cum assentitur sapientiae: assentitur enim ei rei, quam si non percepisset, sapiens non esset. Nec isti quemquam non debere assentiri, nisi rebus quae non possunt percipi, affirmant. Non autem sapientia nihil est. Cum igitur et scit sapientiam, et assentitur sapientiae; neque nihil scit, neque nulli rei sapiens assentitur. Quid amplius vultis? An de illo errore aliquid quaerimus, quem dicunt penitus evitari, si in nullam rem animum declinet assensio? Errat enim, inquiunt, quisquis non solum rem falsam, sed etiam dubiam, quamvis vera sit, approbat: nihil autem quod dubium non sit invenio. At invenit sapiens ipsam, ut dicebamus, sapientiam.

XV

33. Sed hinc jam vultis fortasse me discedere. Non sunt facile securissima relinquenda; cum versutissimis hominibus agimus: morem tamen vobis geram. Sed quid hic dicam? quid? quidnam? illud nimirum vetus dicendum

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there is no certainty, a wise man will not form opinions: he will never accept anything as true."⁵ Hence, it is clear that in the disputations against which we are contending, the Academics are inquiring about a wise man.

32. Therefore, I judge that a wise man has discerned wisdom. In other words, I believe that he understands wisdom.⁶ And precisely for this reason I judge that whenever he gives assent to wisdom, he does not form an opinion; for he would not be a wise man unless he understood that to which he gives assent. In fact, the Academics do not maintain that every man ought always to withhold assent: they say that assent ought not to be given to things that cannot be understood.⁷ But wisdom is not nothing. Therefore, whenever a wise man knows wisdom and gives assent to it, he is neither knowing nothing nor giving assent to nothing. What more do you wish? Or are we inquiring about the error which they claim to be entirely avoided if assent inclines the mind towards nothing? They say that one errs if he approves, not only something false, but even something doubtful that may happen to be true.⁸ I myself find nothing that may not be doubtful; but, as we have said, a wise man finds wisdom at least.

5 Müller, *frag.* 100.

6 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.* II, ix, 27.

7 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xxi, 67.

8 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xxi, 68.

CHAPTER XV

33. Perhaps you now wish me to digress from this topic? When we are dealing with very crafty men, we should not lightly quit even the things that are most secure. Nevertheless, I shall comply with your wishes. And yet, what shall I say? What? Yes, what shall I say? Of course, we

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est, ubi et ipsi habent quod dicant. Quid enim faciam, quem de castris meis foras truditis, num implorabo auxilia doctiorum, cum quibus si superare nequeo, minus pudebit fortasse superari? Jaciam igitur quibus viribus possum fumosum quidem jam et scabrum, sed nisi fallor, validissimum telum. Qui nihil approbat, nihil agit. O hominem rusticum! Et ubi est probabile? ubi est verisimile? Hoc volebatis. Auditisne ut sonent scuta graecanica? Exceptum est quod robustissimum quidem:¹ sed qua manu jaculati sumus? Et nihil mihi potentius isti mei suggerunt; nec aliquid, ut video, vulneris fecimus. Convertam me ad ea quae villa et ager ministrat: onerant me potius majora quam praeparant.

34. Nam cum otiosus diu cogitassem in isto rure, quonam modo possit istuc probabile ac veri simile actus nostros ab errore defendere; primo visum est mihi, ut solet videri cum ista vendebam, belle tectum et munitum. Deinde ubi totum cautius circumspexi, visus sum mihi vidisse unum aditum, qua in securos error irrueret. Non enim solum puto eum errare, qui falsam viam sequitur; sed etiam eum qui veram non sequitur. Faciamus enim duos viatores ad unum locum tendentes, quorum alter instituerit nulli credere, alter nimis credulus sit. Ventum est ad aliquod bivium: hic ille credulus pastori qui aderat, vel cuipiam rusticano: Salve, frugi homo; dic quaeso, qua

1 Ed. Par. *quod robustissimum quidem est.*

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have to mention the source of the Academics' arguments, even though it be an ancient source. But since you are pushing me forth from my own camp, what shall I do? Shall I implore the aid of more learned men, so that—if I am unable to gain the victory—it will be less shameful to be overcome together with them? So, I shall hurl a spear with all my might, a jagged and a blackened spear, to be sure, but—if I am not mistaken—a very effective one, namely: "Whoever accepts nothing as true, can perform no act."¹ O, loutish fellow! And where is the probable? Where is the truth-like? That is what you were expecting. Do you hear how those Grecian shields resound? We have taken up something very weighty indeed. But with what force have we hurled it? Insofar as I can see, we have inflicted no wound, although these helpers of mine furnish me with nothing more effective. So, I shall turn my attention to whatever aid the villa and the farm may afford, because those rather weighty weapons are more burdensome than helpful.

34. I have long and leisurely pondered how the probable and the truth-like could defend our acts from error within the confines of this villa. At first it seemed to me to be neatly protected and fortified, just as it used to seem when I myself was vending those arguments.² But when I had inspected it more carefully, I came to believe that I had discovered an entry where error might rush upon the unwary; for I believe that a man is in error, not only when he is following the wrong path, but also when he is not following the right one. Accordingly, let us suppose that two travelers are journeying to the same place; that one of them is very credulous, and that the other has resolved to believe nobody. When they arrive at a crossroad, the credulous man says to a shepherd or a rustic of some kind,

¹ Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xxxiii, 108; xlvii, 146.

² Cf. *Conf.* IX, ii, 2, 4.

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bene in illum locum pergatur. Respondetur: Si hac ibis, nihil errabis. Et ille ad comitem: Verum dicit, hac eamus. Ridet vir cautissimus, et tam cito assensum facetissime illudit, atque interea illo discedente in bivio figitur: et jam incipit videri turpe cessare, cum ecce ex alio viae cornu lautus quidam et urbanus equo insidens eminet, et propinquare occipit: gratulatur iste. Tum advenienti, et salutato indicat propositum, quaerit viam; dicit etiam remansionis suae causam, quo benevolentiores reddat, pastori eum praeferens. Ille autem casu planus erat de iis quos Samardacos² jam vulgus vocat. Tenuit suum morem homo pessimus etiam gratis. Hac perge, ait: nam ego inde venio. Decepit, atque abiit. Sed quando iste deciperetur? Non enim monstrationem istam tanquam veram, inquit, approbo; sed quia est veri similis. Et hic otiosum esse nec honestum nec utile est; hac eam. Interea ille qui assentiendo erravit, tam cito existimans vera esse verba pastoris, in loco illo quo tendebant, jam se reficiebat: iste autem non errans, siquidem probabile sequitur, circumit silvas nescio quas, nec jam cui locus ille notus sit, ad quem venire proposuerat, invenit. Vere vobis dicam, cum ista cogitarem, risum tenere non potui, fieri per Academicorum verba

² Ita scribitur in editione Bad. et in pluribus mss. In antiquis etiam editionibus Chrysostomi, Homilia 17, in Epist. ad Ephes. legitur *Samardakous*. Nec multum aliter apud Am. et tres mss. qui habent, *Samardocos*. At Er. et Lov. *Sarmadacos*; uti etiam scribit vetus commentator Horatii, ad illud lib. I, Satir. 6, "*Sarmadacos et sortilegos mathematicos . . .*"

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who happens to be there: "Hey, my good man, which is the right road to that place?" He receives this answer: "If you travel by this road, you will not go astray." Then he says to his companion: "This man is telling the truth: let us go this way." The latter smiles, and very facetiously ridicules him for having assented so readily. Then, while the one proceeds on his journey, the other stands still at the crossroad until his prolonged delay begins to occasion him embarrassment. Now, behold! from another branch of the highway a neatly dressed and urbane man on horseback comes into view; and our man rejoices because this stranger is approaching. He greets the new arrival, informs him of his purpose, and makes inquiry about the road. Esteeming this man more highly than the shepherd, and wishing to win his favor, he tells him the reason of his delay. But the horseman happened to be one of those who are commonly called *Samardacs*;³ and the rascal spontaneously followed his usual practice: "Go this way," he said, "for I am now coming from that place." He deceived his inquirer, and went away. But how could that inquirer be deceived? "I do not," he says, "accept that information as something true: I accept it as truth-like. And since it is neither fitting nor profitable to be here idle, I shall take that road." Meanwhile the other traveler has been already refreshed at the place for which they had set out, although he had erred by giving assent when he so readily believed that the words of the shepherd were true. But this one is now wandering around a forest of some kind, although he has avoided error by following the probable. In fact, he has not yet found anyone who even knows the place to which he had purposed to go. Let me tell you truly that when I was pondering those arguments of theirs, I could not refrain

³ *Samardac* is a word of unknown origin. It was of common usage in Africa, and was incorporated into Greek and Latin. Saint John Chrysostom uses it at least once, and immediately gives its Greek equivalent. (Hom. 17, in Epist. ad Ephes.). It means a juggler.

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nescio quomodo, ut erret ille qui veram viam vel casu tenet; ille autem qui per avios montes probabiliter ductus est, nec petitam regionem invenit, non videatur errare. Ut enim temerariam consensionem jure condemnem, facilius ambo errant, quam iste non errat. Hinc jam adversum ista verba vigilantior, ipsa facta hominum et mores considerare coepi. Tum vero tam multa mihi et tam capitalia in istos venerunt in mentem, ut jam non riderem, sed partim stomacharer, partim dolerem homines doctissimos et acutissimos in tanta scelera sententiarum et flagitia devolutos.

XVI

35. Certe enim, non fortasse omnis qui errat, peccat; omnis tamen qui peccat, aut errare conceditur, aut aliquid pejus. Quid si ergo aliquis adolescentium cum hos audierit dicentes: Turpe est errare, et ideo nulli rei consentire debemus; sed tamen cum agit quisque quod ei videtur probabile, nec peccat,¹ nec errat: illud tantum meminerit, quidquid occurrit vel animo vel sensibus, non pro vero esse approbandum. Id igitur audiens adolescens, insidiabitur pudicitiae uxoris alienae. Te, te consulo, M. Tulli; de adolescentium moribus vitaeque tractamus, cui educandae atque instituendae omnes illae litterae tuae vigilaverunt. Quid

¹ Bad. et mss. undecim, *quod ei videtur probabile, nec cessat, nec errat.*

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from laughter. According to the Academics' own words it happens somehow or other that a man is in error when he follows the right path by mere chance; but that a man who was led by probability, seems to be free from error, even though he was led through trackless mountains and never found the place he was seeking. To censure the practice of assenting rashly, it is more fitting to say that both those men were in error than to say that the latter avoided it. Consequently, I became more wary with regard to the assertions of the Academics, and I began to reflect on the actions and customs of men. Then I discovered so many capital arguments against the Academics, that I was no longer laughing at them: I was loathing them and bewailing the fact that such learned and ingenious men had fallen headlong into such abominable and shameful opinions.⁴

4 See note 10, page 256.

CHAPTER XVI

35. Although perchance not every one who falls into error, commits a sin; yet it is conceded that every one who sins, falls into error or something worse. Therefore, when some young man hears those men saying: "To err is shameful; and therefore we ought not to give assent to anything. But when one follows what seems probable¹ to him, he commits neither a sin nor an error. Let each one remember this only: that we are not to accept the truth of anything that presents itself to the mind or to the senses"—when the young man hears this, suppose he plots against the chastity of another's wife? Now, I am consulting you—you, Marcus Tullius. We are dealing with the life and morals of young men: and all those writings of yours have been diligently directed towards the in-

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aliud dicturus es, quam non tibi esse probabile ut id faciat adolescens? At illi probabile est. Nam si ex alieno probabili vivimus, nec tu debuisti administrare rempublicam; quia Epicuro visum est non esse faciendum. Adulterabit igitur ille juvenis conjugem alienam: qui deprehensus si fuerit, ubi te inveniet a quo defendatur? Quanquam etiam si inveniatur, quid dicturus es? Negabis profecto. Quid si tam clarum est, ut frustra inficere? Persuadebis nimirum, tanquam in Cumano gymnasio atque adeo Neopolitano, nihil eum peccasse, imo etiam nec errasse quidem. Non enim faciendum esse adulterium pro vero sibi persuasit; probabile occurrit, secutus est, fecit: aut fortasse non fecit, sed fecisse sibi visus est. Iste autem maritus, homo fatuus, perturbat omnia litibus pro uxoris castitate proclamans, cum qua forte nunc dormit, et nescit. Hoc illi iudices si intellexerint, aut negligent Academicos, et tanquam crimen verissimum punient; aut eisdem obtemperantes, verisimiliter hominem probabiliterque damnabunt, ut jam quid agat iste patronus prorsus ignoret. Cui enim succenseat non habebit, cum omnes se nihil errasse dicant; quando non assentientes, id quod visum est probabile, fecerint. Ponet igitur personam patroni, et philosophi consolatoris suscipiet: ita facile adolescenti, qui jam tantum in Academia profecerit, persuadebit ut se tanquam in

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stituting and fostering of morality. What else would you say but that to you such an act is not probable¹ for a young man to attempt? To him, however, it is probable. And if we are to regulate our lives in accordance with what is probable to some one else, then you ought not to have administered the government of the state; for it seemed to Epicurus that it ought not to be done. So, that young man will commit adultery with another's wife. And if he is arraigned, where will he find you to defend him? And even if he should find you, what would you say? Of course, you would enter a denial. But what if the fact is so clear that your denial would be to no purpose? Undoubtedly, you will advance a persuasive plea—as you would do in the gymnasium at Cumae or at Naples—that he committed no sin, nay, that he was not even in error. For, as to the precept that adultery is not to be committed—he was convinced that this precept is true; but the probable came to his mind, and he followed it: he committed adultery. Or, again, perhaps he did not commit it: perhaps it merely seemed to him that he committed it. And the husband, that silly fellow, is throwing everything into turmoil by litigation, invoking the law to vindicate the honor of his wife—the wife with whom perhaps he is now sleeping, but does not know it. If the judges understand all this, either they will ignore the Academics and punish it as a real crime, or they will yield to them, and convict the man as probably guilty in a truth-like manner. This defense attorney will then absolutely not know what to do. And yet, he cannot be incensed against anybody; for all of them will say that, since they did not give assent, they did not err: they did merely what seemed probable. So, he will divest himself of the character of defense attorney, and will don that of a consoling philosopher. He will easily persuade the young man—who has already become quite proficient in the Academy—to regard himself as one con-

1 *i.e.* approvable.

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somnis putet esse damnatum. Sed vos me joculari arbitramini: liquet² dejerare per omne divinum,³ nescire me prorsus quomodo iste peccaverit; si, quisquis id egerit quod probabile videtur, non peccat. Nisi forte in totum aliud esse dicunt errare, aliud peccare; seque illis praeceptis egisse ne erremus, peccare autem nihil magnum esse duxisse.

36. Taceo de homicidiis, parricidiis, sacrilegiis, omnibusque omnino, quae fieri aut cogitari possunt, flagitiis aut facinoribus, quae paucis verbis, et quod est gravius, apud sapientissimos iudices defenduntur: Nihil consensi, et ideo non erravi. Quomodo autem non facerem quod probabile visum est? Qui autem non putant ista probabiliter posse persuaderi, legant orationem Catilinae, qua patriae parricidium, quo uno continentur omnia scelera, persuasit.⁴ Jam illud quis non ridet? Ipsi dicunt, nihil se in agendo sequi nisi probabile, et quaerunt magnopere veritatem, cum eis sit probabile non posse inveniri. O mirum monstrum! Sed hoc omittamus, minus id ad nos, minus ad vitae nostrae discrimen, minus ad fortunarum periculum pertinet. Illud est capitale, illud formidolosum, illud optimo cuique metuendum, quod nefas omne, si haec ratio probabilis erit, cum probabile cuiquam visum fuerit esse faciendum, tantum nulli quasi vero assentiatur, non solum sine sceleris, sed etiam sine erroris vituperatione committat.

2 Lov. *libet*. Sed melius, *liquet dejerare*; quod usurpatum est ex Terentio, in *Eunucho*, act. 2, scen. 3.

3 *Retract.*, lib. I, cap. I, n. 4.

4 Sallustius, *de Bello Catil.*, cap. 12.

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victed in a dream. But perhaps you think that I am speaking in jest. Well, if no sin is committed by anybody who does whatever seems probable to him, then I am ready to swear by everything holy² that I do not see how that young man committed sin. I do not see it, unless they say that sin and error are entirely different things, and that they have formulated their precepts to preserve us from error, but that they regard sin as of minor importance.

36. I am saying nothing about homicides, parricides, sacrileges, and all the villainies and crimes that can be perpetrated or imagined. And worse still, these crimes and villainies are defended in the courts of even the wisest judges; and their defense is expressed in those few words: "I gave no consent; and therefore I did not err. And at any rate, how could I help doing what seemed probable?" And whoever thinks that such defense cannot be plausibly advanced by probable arguments, let him read Catiline's oration.³ In that oration he plausibly defends parricide of the fatherland, a crime in which all other crimes are included. Furthermore, they say that in all their actions they follow nothing but the probable; and nevertheless they are busily searching for the truth,⁴ although they think it probable that the truth cannot be found. Who would not laugh at that? O, marvelous monstrosity! But let us skip it: it does not concern us, it does not pertain to the importance of life or the hazards of fortune. The next, however, is a capital error. It is dreadful, abhorrent to every upright human feeling. It involves the consequence that if the Academic theory is probable, then anybody may—not only without incurring the reproach of wickedness, but even without occasioning the blame of error—commit every heinous crime whenever it seems probable to him

2 *Retract.*, I, i, 4. Cf. Terentius, *Eunuchus*, 331.

3 Sallust, *In Catilinam*, c. 20.

4 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, iii, 7.

Quid ergo? Haec illi non viderunt? Imo solertissime prudentissimeque viderunt, nec mihi ullo pacto tantum arrogaverim, ut M. Tullium aliqua ex parte sequar industria, vigilantia, ingenio, doctrina: cui tamen asserenti, nihil scire posse hominem, si hoc solum diceretur, Scio ita videri mihi; unde id refelleret non haberet.

XVII

37. Quid igitur placuit tantis viris perpetuis et pertinacibus contentionibus agere, ne in quemquam cadere veris scientia videretur? Audite jam paulo attentius, non quid sciam, sed quid existimem: hoc enim ad ultimum reservabam, ut explicarem, si possem, quale mihi videatur esse totum Academicorum consilium. Plato vir sapientissimus et eruditissimus temporum suorum, qui et ita locutus est, ut quaecumque diceret, magna fierent, et ea locutus est, ut quomodocumque diceret, parva non fierent;¹ dicitur post mortem Socratis magistri sui, quem singulariter dilexerat, a Pythagoreis etiam multa didicisse. Pythagoras autem graeca philosophia non contentus, quae tunc aut pene nulla erat, aut certe occultissima, postquam commotus Pherecydae cujusdam Syri disputationibus, immortalem esse

1 *Retract.*, lib. I, cap. I, n. 4.

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that such an act ought to be performed, provided that he accept nothing as true. And what of this? Did those men not see this consequence? Nay, with the utmost skill and discernment they saw it very clearly. Of a certainty, I would not be so arrogant as to claim that I have inherited the industry, alertness, genius or learning of Marcus Tullius. And yet, when he said that a man cannot know anything, he would have no way of refuting an objector if only this retort were made to him, namely: "I know that it seems so to me."

CHAPTER XVII

37. Then, why were such great men willing to contend so incessantly and with such persistence to make it appear unlikely that a knowledge of truth falls to the lot of any man? Listen a little more attentively, not to what I know, but to what I think. I have saved this to the last, so that I might explain—if I can—what seems to me to have been the sole purpose of the Academics. Plato, the wisest and most erudite man of his day,¹ spoke in such a manner that importance attached to whatever he said, and he spoke such things as would not be unimportant no matter how he spoke them. He is said to have received still further knowledge from the Pythagoreans after the death of his master, Socrates, whom he loved with a singular affection. But Pythagoras himself had been dissatisfied with Greek philosophy; for at that time it was almost nil, or, at any rate, very occult. Convinced by the disputations of Pherecydes, a philosopher from Skyros,² he had come to believe in the immortality of the human soul.

¹ *Retract.*, I, i, 4. Cf. Cicero, *ibid.*, I, iv, 17.

² The word, *Syri*, in the Latin text may be a copyist's error for *Scyri*. Pherecydes, the teacher of Pythagoras, was from Skyros, an island in the Aegean Sea.

animum credidit, multos sapientes etiam longe lateque peregrinatus audierat. Igitur Plato adjiciens lepori subtilitatisque Socraticae quam in moralibus habuit, naturalium divinarumque rerum peritiam, quam ab eis quos memoravi diligenter acceperat; subjungensque quasi formatricem illarum partium, judicemque dialecticam, quae aut ipsa esset, aut sine qua sapientia omnino esse non posset; perfectam dicitur composuisse philosophiae disciplinam, de qua nunc disserere tempus² non est. Sat est enim ad id quod volo, Platonem sensisse duos esse mundos: unum intelligibilem, in quo ipsa veritas habitaret; istum autem sensibilem, quem manifestum est nos visu tactuque sentire. Itaque illum verum, hunc veri similem et ad illius imaginem factum. Et ideo de illo in ea, quae se cognosceret; anima velut expoliri et quasi serenari veritatem; de hoc autem in stultorum animis non scientiam, sed opinionem posse generari. Quidquid tamen ageretur in hoc mundo per eas virtutes, quas civiles vocabat, aliarum verarum virtutum similes, quae, nisi paucis sapientibus, ignotae essent, non posse nisi veri simile nominari.

38. Haec et alia hujusmodi mihi videntur inter successores ejus, quantum poterant, esse servata, et pro mysteriis custodita. Non enim aut facile ista percipiuntur, nisi ab eis qui se ab omnibus vitiis mundantes, in aliam quamdam plus quam humanam consuetudinem vindicaverint; aut non graviter peccat quisquis ea sciens quoslibet homines

2 In P. B., *temporis*.

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And then, journeying far and wide, he listened to the discourses of many wise men. To the Socratic charm and precision which he had mastered in ethics, Plato joined the skill in the natural and divine sciences which he had diligently acquired from the men I have mentioned. Then he added dialectic, which he believed to be either wisdom itself or at least an indispensable prerequisite for wisdom, and which would synthesize and determine those components. Hence, he is said to have elaborated a complete philosophic science.³ But we have no time to treat of this at the present moment. For my present purpose, it is sufficient that Plato held the following theories: that there are two worlds—an intelligible world in which the truth itself resides, and this sensible world which it is manifest that we perceive by sight and touch; that consequently the former is a true world, and the present world is truth-like—made unto the image of the other; that the truth emanates from the intelligible world, and is, as it were, refined and brightened in the soul which knows itself; that with regard to the present world, opinion—but not knowledge [*scientia*]⁴—can be engendered in the minds of the unwise; that in this sensible world there are political virtues, *viz.*, powers similar to other true powers that are known by only a few wise men; and that whatever is represented by these political virtues, can be called nothing more than truth-like.

38. It seems to me that these and other theories of this kind were preserved among his followers, and—insofar as it was possible—guarded as secrets.⁴ For, on the one hand, either such theories are not easily understood, except by those who cleanse themselves from all imperfections and adopt a mode of life that is more than human; or, on the other hand, whoever knows those theories and is

3 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.* I, iv, 17; *id.*, II, xxviii, 91.

4 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, I, ix, x; II, xviii, 60. See note 11, page 258.

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docere voluerit. Itaque Zenonem principem Stoicorum, cum jam quibusdam auditis et creditis, in scholam relictam a Platone venisset, quam tunc Polemo retinebat, suspectum habitum suspicor, nec talem visum cui Platonica illa velut sacrosancta decreta facile prodi committique deberent, priusquam dedicisset³ ea, quae in illam scholam ab aliis accepta detulerat. Moritur Polemo, succedit ei Archesilas Zenonis quidem condiscipulus, sed sub Polemonis magisterio. Quamobrem cum Zeno sua quadam de mundo, et maxime de anima, propter quam vera philosophia vigilat, sententia delectaretur, dicens eam esse mortalem, nec quidquam esse praeter hunc sensibilem mundum, nihilque in eo agi, nisi corpore; nam et Deum ipsum ignem putabat: prudentissime atque utilissime mihi videtur Archesilas, cum illud late serperet malum, occultasse penitus Academiae sententiam, et quasi aurum inveniendum quandoque posteris obruisse. Quare cum in falsas opiniones ruere turba sit pronior, et consuetudine corporum omnia esse corporea facillime, sed noxie credatur; instituit vir acutissimus atque humanissimus, dedocere potius quos patiebatur male doctos, quam docere quos dociles non arbitrabatur. Inde illa omnia nata sunt quae novae Academiae tribuuntur, quia eorum necessitatem veteres non habebant.

3 Lov., *dedocuissent*.

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willing to teach them to all kinds of men, is not thereby guilty of a grievous offense. Now, when Zeno, the founder of the Stoic School, had heard and accepted some of the teachings, he came to the school which had been founded by Plato, and which Polemon was then conducting. It is my opinion that he was held suspect there. I believe he did not seem to be the kind of man to whom those Platonic and sacrosanct teachings ought to be disclosed and entrusted—at least, before he had unlearned what he had received from other schools and had brought with him to this school. Polemon dies. He is succeeded by Arcesilas, who was indeed a fellow student with Zeno, but under the tutorship of Polemon. At this time Zeno was fascinated by a certain theory of his own regarding the world, and especially with reference to the soul—in whose regard, true philosophy is ever vigilant. According to his theory, the soul is mortal, there is nothing beyond this sensible world, and in this world there is no operation except the corporeal.⁵ In fact, he believed that God was fire. In view of the fact that this pernicious theory was becoming widespread, I believe that Arcesilas very prudently and ingeniously concealed the complete doctrine of the Academy, and cached it as a golden treasure to be discovered some day by posterity. But the populace is rather prone to rush into false opinions; and, through familiarity with bodies, a person very readily—but very dangerously, as well—comes to believe that all things are corporeal.⁶ Consequently, that ingenious and erudite master resolved to disabuse those whose mis-education distressed him, rather than to teach those whom he considered unteachable. Hence the origin of all those teachings that are attributed to the New Academy; for the earlier Academics had had no need of them.

5 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, I, xi, 40; *Tuscul. Quaest.*, I. xxii, 79.

6 Cf. *Conf.*, IV, xv, 24.

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39. Quod si Zeno expergefactus esset aliquando, et vidisset neque quidquam comprehendere posse, nisi quale ipse definiebat, neque tale aliquid in corporibus posse inveniri, quibus ille tribuebat omnia; olim prorsus hoc genus disputationum, quod magna necessitate flagraverat, fuisset extinctum. Sed Zeno imagine constantiae deceptus, ut ipsis Academicis videbatur, nec mihi etiam non videtur, pertinax fuit: fidesque illa corporum perniciosa quoquo modo potuit pervixit in Chrysippum, qui ei (nam maxime poterat), magnas vires latius se diffundendi dabat; nisi ex illa parte Carneades acrior et vigilantior superioribus caeteris ita restitisset, ut mirer illam opinionem aliquid etiam postea valuisse. Namque Carneades primo illam velut calumniandi impudentiam, qua videbat Archesilam non mediocriter infamatum, deposuit; ne contra omnia velle dicere quasi ostentationis causa videretur: sed ipsos proprie sibi Stoicos, atque Chrysippum convellendos evertendosque proposuit.

XVIII

40. Deinde cum undique premeretur, si nulli rei esset assensus, nihil acturum esse sapientem (o hominem mirum atque adeo non mirum! ab ipsis enim Platonis fontibus profluebat); attendit sapienter quales illi actiones proba-

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39. And if Zeno had but come to his senses when he was maintaining that nothing but bodies exists and that nothing can be understood except the kind of thing he was describing, and if he had but seen that such a thing cannot be found in bodies, then every disputation of this sort—which had inevitably burst into conflagration—would long ago have become extinct. But, as the Academics believed—and I share their view in this—he was deceived by the seeming constancy in corporeal operations. At any rate, he was persistent; and that pernicious belief in bodies continued as best it could down to Chrysippus, who—as he was well able to do—endowed it with the power of diffusing itself widely.⁷ Carneades, however, was more keen and vigilant than all those whom I have mentioned;⁸ and he opposed this theory so masterfully that I marvel at its having had any further acceptance. In the first place, he discarded what might be called the impudence of quibbling; for he was aware that Arcesilas had brought himself into serious disrepute by this mode of disputation. But his real purpose was to convulse and overthrow the Stoics and Chrysippus.⁹

7 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, II, xxiv, 75.

8 *Id.*, I, xii, 46.

9 For a parallel, but by no means identical, exposition of the same topic, cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, I, iv - xi; II, xx - xlvii.

CHAPTER XVIII

40. And from all sides opponents arose to harass him with the objection that if assent were to be given to nothing whatever, a wise man would have to refrain from all activity.¹ O, marvelous Carneades! And yet, not so marvelous; but a limpid stream from Platonic springs. At any rate, he wisely noted what kind of actions those objectors

1 *Id.*, *ibid.*, II, xii, 39; xxxiii, 108.

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rent, easque nescio quarum verarum similes videns, id quod in hoc mundo ad agendum sequeretur, veri simile nominavit. Cui enim esset simile et perite norat, et prudenter tegebat, idque etiam probabile appellabat. Probat enim bene imaginem, quisquis ejus intuetur exemplum. Quomodo enim approbat sapiens,¹ aut quomodo simile sequitur veri, cum ipsum verum quid sit ignoret? Ergo illi norant, et approbabant falsa in quibus imitationem laudabilem rerum verarum animadvertabant.² Sed quia hoc tanquam profanis nec fas, nec facile erat ostendere; reliquerunt posteris, et quibus illo tempore potuerunt, signum quoddam sententiae suae. Illos autem bene dialecticos de verbis movere quaestionem insultantes irridentesque prohibebant. Ob hoc dicitur Carneades etiam tertiae Academiae princeps atque auctor fuisse.

41. Deinde in nostrum Tullium conflictio ista duravit, jam plane saucia et ultimo spiritu latinas litteras inflatura. Nam nihil mihi videtur inflatius, quam tam multa copiosissime atque ornatissime dicere, non ita sentientem. Quibus tamen ventis feneus ille platonicus Antiochus satis, ut mihi videtur, dissipatus atque dispersus est. Nam Epicureorum greges in animis deliciosorum populorum aprica stabula posuerunt. Quippe Antiochus Philonis auditor, hominis quantum arbitror circumspectissimi, qui jam veluti aperire cedentibus hostibus portas coeperat, et ad Platonis auctori-

1 In octo mss. *Quomodo ergo nihil approbat sapiens.*

2 *Retract.*, lib. I, cap. I, n. 4.

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were approving as true; and he saw that they bore a resemblance to some kind of true actions. Therefore, he denominated as *truth-like* whatever he would follow in his actions in this world. He prudently concealed the nature of that *truth-like* model—which he also called *probable*—although he had complete and accurate knowledge of its nature; for whoever contemplates the exemplar, readily approves the representation. But how could a wise man approve the truth-like, or how could he follow it, as long as he did not know what truth itself was?² Therefore, those men knew what truth was; but they approved false things in which they recognized a laudable imitation of true things.³ But because it was neither easy nor fitting to reveal it to the uninitiated, they left to posterity—and to whomsoever they could, in their own day—a certain token of their doctrine; but, by insult and derision, they prevented the dialecticians from raising questions about their terminology. Hence it is that Carneades is said to have been the founder and chief of a third Academy.

41. That conflict continued down to our own Tullius. Of course, by this time it was plainly in the decrepit stage, but it was destined to bloat Latin literature with its last breath; for to me nothing seems more bloated than for a man to express copiously and ornately so many things that he does not believe. And yet, in my opinion, that Platonic straw man, Antiochus, was completely demolished and blown away by those same windy blasts; for the Epicurean herds are wont to depend on voluptuous minds for their open stables.⁴ But Antiochus had been one of Philo's pupils. And, to the best of my judgment, Philo was a most circumspect person. He had begun both to open the gates, so to speak, for his yielding adversaries, and to lead the

2 Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, II, xi, 33. ✓

3 *Retract.*, I, i, 4.

4 See note 12, page 259.

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tatem Academiam legesque revocare; quanquam et Metrodorus id antea facere tentaverat, qui primus dicitur esse confessus, non decreto³ placuisse Academicis nihil posse comprehendi, sed necessario contra Stoicos hujusmodi eos arma sumpsisse: igitur Antiochus, ut institueram dicere, auditis Philone academico, et Mnesarcho stoico, in Academiam veterem, quasi vacuum defensoribus, et quasi nullo hoste securam, velut adjutor et civis irrepserat, nescio quid inferens mali de Stoicorum cineribus, quod Platonis adita violaret. Sed huic arreptis iterum illis armis et Philon restitit donec moreretur, et omnes ejus reliquias Tullius noster oppressit, se vivo impatiens labefactari vel contaminari quidquid amavisset: adeo post illa tempora non longo intervallo omni pervicacia pertinaciaque demortua, os illud Platonis quod in philosophia purgatissimum est et lucidissimum, dimotis nubibus erroris emicuit, maxime in Plotino, qui platonicus philosophus ita ejus similis judicatus est, ut simul eos vixisse, tantum autem interest⁴ temporis ut in hoc ille revixisse putandus sit.

3 In mss. prope omnibus legitur, *non de recto*.

4 Er. et Ven., *interesse*.

XIX

42. Itaque nunc philosophos non fere videmus, nisi aut Cynicos aut Peripateticos aut Platonicos: et Cynicos quidem, quia eos vitae quaedam delectat libertas atque licentia. Quod autem ad eruditionem doctrinamque attinet, et mores quibus consulitur animae, quia non defue-

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Academy and its principles back to the authority of Plato. Of course, that had been previously tried by Metrodorus, who is said to have been the first to confess that the Academics did not approve the principle that nothing can be perceived: he said they had been forced to take up that kind of weapon against the Stoics. And so, as I had begun to say, when Antiochus had heard the discourse of Philo the Academic and of Mnesarchus the Stoic, he stealthily—in the guise of a helpful citizen—entered the Old Academy; for at this time it was ungarrisoned, so to speak, and entirely undefended against any foe. And from the ashes of the Stoics, he brought with him some kind of evil which profaned the portals of the Academy. But Philo wrested those weapons from him, and resisted him as long as he lived. And our own Tullius buried all his remains; for throughout his entire life Tullius could not tolerate the undermining or contamination of anything he loved. And shortly afterwards, when all the persistent sophistry was dead, and when the clouds of error had been dispelled, then Plato's countenance—which is the cleanest and brightest in philosophy—suddenly appeared, especially in Plotinus. Indeed, this Platonist philosopher has been adjudged so like to Plato that they would seem to have lived together; but there is such a long interval of time between them, that Plato is to be regarded as having relived in Plotinus.

CHAPTER XIX

42. And thus it is that today we see scarcely any philosophers except Cynics or Peripatetics or Platonists. We have the Cynics, just because a certain libertine and licentious kind of life delights them. But as regards erudition and doctrine and morality by which the interests of the soul are consulted, a system of philosophy—the truest philosophy, in

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runt acutissimi et solertissimi viri, qui docerent disputationibus suis Aristotelem ac Platonem ita sibi concinere, ut imperitis minusque attentis dissentire videantur; multis quidem saeculis multisque contentionibus, sed tamen eliquata est, ut opinor, una verissimae philosophiae disciplina. Non enim est ista hujus mundi philosophia, quam sacra nostra meritissime detestantur, sed alterius intelligibilis; cui animas multiformibus erroris tenebris caecatas, et altissimis a corpore sordibus oblitas, nunquam ista ratio subtilissima revocaret, nisi summus Deus populari quadam clementia divini intellectus auctoritatem usque ad ipsum corpus humanum declinaret, atque submitteret; cujus non solum praeceptis, sed etiam factis excitatae animae redire in semetipsas, et respicere patriam, etiam sine disputationum concertatione potuissent.

XX

43. Hoc mihi de Academicis interim probabiliter, ut potui, persuasi. Quod si falsum est, nihil ad me, cui satis est jam non arbitrari, non posse ab homine inveniri veritatem. Quisquis autem putat hoc sensisse Academicos, ipsum Ciceronem audiat. Ait enim illis morem fuisse occultandi sententiam suam, nec eam cuiquam nisi qui secum ad

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my opinion—has been crystallized through multifarious disputes throughout many centuries, because the times did not lack men of the utmost discernment and industry who, in their disputations, continued to teach that Aristotle and Plato blend and chord in such a manner that to the inattentive and unskilled they seem to be out of harmony.¹ For it is not the philosophy of this world—the philosophy which our sacred mysteries rightly detest.² It is of the other world, the intelligible world—a world to which even the most acute reasoning would never lead souls blinded by the multiform darkness of error and smeared with so much grime from the bodies. Human reason would never lead such souls to that intelligible world if the most high God had not vouchsafed—through clemency towards the whole human race—to send the authority of the divine intellect down even to a human body, and caused it to dwell therein, so that souls would be aroused not only by divine precepts but also by divine acts, and would be thus enabled to reflect on themselves and to gaze upon their fatherland, without any disputatious wranglings.

1 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, I, iv, 17 sq.; *id.*, II, v, 15.

2 Cf. *Col.*, II, 8.

CHAPTER XX

43. At one time or another, I have become convinced—insofar as I was able—that this is probably true with regard to the Academics. And even if it is false, I need not care; for I am satisfied so long as I do not believe that the discovery of the truth is beyond the reach of man. But whoever thinks that the Academics were of this opinion, let him hear Cicero himself; for he says that it was their practice to conceal their theory, and that they usually did not disclose it to anybody unless he had con-

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senectutem usque vixisset,¹ aperire consuesse. Quae sit autem ista, Deus viderit; eam tamen arbitror Platonis fuisse. Sed ut breviter accipiat omne propositum meum; quoquo modo se habeat humana sapientia, eam me video nondum percepisse. Sed cum trigesimum et tertium aetatis annum agam, non me arbitror desperare debere eam me quandoque adepturum. Contemptis tamen caeteris omnibus quae bona mortales putant, huic investigandae inservire proposui. A quo me negotio quoniam rationes Academicorum non leviter deterrebant, satis, ut arbitror, contra eas ista disputatione munitus sum. Nulli autem dubium est gemino pondere nos impelli ad discendum, auctoritatis atque rationis. Mihi autem certum est nusquam prorsus a Christi auctoritate discedere: non enim reperio valentiorum. Quod autem subtilissima ratione persequendum est; ita enim jam sum affectus, ut quid sit verum, non credendo solum, sed etiam intelligendo apprehendere impatienter desiderem; apud Platonicos me interim quod sacris nostris non repugnet reperturum esse confido.

44. Hic postquam sermonis finem me fecisse aspexerunt, quanquam jam erat nox, et aliquid etiam lucerna illata scriptum erat; tamen illi adolescentes intentissime exspectabant, utrum Alypius vel alio die se responsurum esse promitteret. Tum ille: Nihil mihi aliquando, inquit, tam ex sententia provenisse affirmare paratus sum, quam

1 Sic juxta tres mss. [*vixissent*].

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tinued with them up to his old age.¹ Of course, I do not know exactly what their theory was; but I think it was Plato's theory. And now—that you may grasp my whole meaning in a few words—whatever may be the nature of human wisdom, I see that I have not yet understood it. Nevertheless, although I am now in the thirty-third year of my age,² I do not think that I ought to despair of understanding it some day; for I have resolved to disregard all the other things which mortals consider good, and to devote myself to an investigation of it. And whereas the reasonings of the Academics used to deter me greatly from such an undertaking, I believe that through this disputation I am now sufficiently protected against those reasonings. Certainly no one doubts that we are impelled towards knowledge by a twofold force—the force of authority and the force of reason. And I am resolved never to deviate in the least from the authority of Christ, for I find none more powerful. But as to what is attainable by acute and accurate reasoning, such is my state of mind that I am impatient to grasp what truth is—to grasp it, not only by belief but also by comprehension. Meanwhile, I am confident that I shall find among the Platonists what is not in opposition to our Sacred Scriptures.³

44. At this point, they saw that I had brought my discourse to an end. Although it was now nighttime—in fact, some of the discourse had been inscribed on the tablets after a lamp had been fetched—the boys were nevertheless watching most intently to see whether Alypius would promise to reply, even some other day. And then Alypius speaks:

“I am ready to avow that nothing more agreeable has

1 Cf. *Academ.*, frag. 21, Müller; *id.*, II, xviii, 60.

2 He had reached his thirty-third year one week previously. See note 8, page 252.

3 See note 4, page 245.

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quod hodierna disputatione discedo superatus. Nec istam meam tantum puto debere esse laetitiam. Communicabo ergo eam vobiscum, concertatores mei, vel iudices nostri. Quandoquidem isto se pacto a suis posteris vinci, ipsi etiam fortasse Academici optarunt. Quid enim nobis hoc sermonis lepore jucundius, quid sententiarum gravitate perpensius, quid benevolentia promptius, quid doctrina peritius videri aut exhiberi posset? Prorsus nequaquam digne admirari possum, quod tam facete aspera, tam fortiter desperata, tam moderate convicta, tam dilucide obscura tractata sunt. Quare jam, socii mei, expectationem vestram, qua me ad respondendum provocabatis, certiore spe mecum ad discendum convertite. Habemus ducem qui nos in ipsa veritatis arcana, Deo jam monstrante, perducatur.

45. Hic ego, cum illi puerili quodam studio, quod Alypius responsurus non videbatur, quasi fraudatos vultu se ostenderent: Invidetis, inquam arridens, laudibus meis? Sed quoniam de Alypii constantia jam securus nihil eum timeo; ut vos quoque mihi gratias agatis, instruo vos adversus illum qui tantam intentionem vestrae expectationis offendit. Legite Academicos; et cum ibi victorem (quid enim facilius?) istarum nugarum,² Ciceronem inveneritis, cogatur iste a vobis hunc nostrum sermonem contra illa

2 *Retract.*, lib. I, cap. I, n. 4.

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ever happened to me than the fact that I have been vanquished in this disputation. And I believe that this joy ought not to be exclusively mine. Therefore, I gladly share it with you, my fellow disputants, or—if you will— our judges. And I do this all the more gladly because perhaps the Academics themselves hoped to be thus vanquished some day by their own descendants. And what could be offered or experienced more delightful than the pleasantry of the satire, more nicely pondered than the import of the sentiments, more plainly evident than the good will, more apt than the doctrine? I am absolutely unable to give fitting expression to my admiration of the fact that unpleasant matters have been treated with such good humor; difficult matters, with such forcefulness; proved points, with such moderation; and obscure points, with such clearness. Wherefore, fellow disputants, change that expectant longing of yours, by which you were trying to provoke me to a rebuttal. Exchange it for the better hope of becoming fellow disciples with me; for we now have the kind of leader that, under God's guidance, will bring us to the secrets of the truth."⁴

45. With a certain boyish eagerness, the youths were now showing by their countenances that they considered themselves cheated, as it were, because Alypius would make no reply. Then, with a smile, I say: Are you envious because I receive such praise? From now on, I have absolutely no fear of Alypius; for I have no misgivings as to his constancy. But, so that you also may have reason to thank me, I shall provide you with arms against him, since he has disappointed you of your fond expectations. Read the Academics. And when you discover that in those writings Cicero has demolished all this nonsense of mine, then let Alypius be compelled by you to defend this dis-

4 Cf. Cicero, *Academ.* I, xii, 43.

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invicta defendere. Hanc tibi, Alypi, duram mercedem pro mea falsa laude restituo. Hic cum arrisissent, finem tantae conflictionis, utrum firmissimum nescio, modestius tamen et citius quam speraveram fecimus.

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course of mine against those irrefutable arguments.⁵ And this, Alypius, is the bitter recompense I am making to you for the undeserved praise you have bestowed on me. Then they laughed, and we brought this important debate to an end. Whether our conclusion is a well founded one, I know not; but at any rate, the debate ended with greater moderation and dispatch than I had expected.

⁵ *Retract.*, I, i, 4. Of the four books that comprised Cicero's *Academicæ Quaestiones*, only the fourth and portions of the first are extant.

THE RETRACTATIONS

NOTE

Saint Augustine's settled judgment on philosophical questions is to be sought, not in the immature compositions of the catechumen at Cassiciacum, but in his considered pronouncements as Bishop. For, although he never deviated from the twofold criterion he enunciated at Cassiciacum—divine authority and the force of reason¹—he nevertheless modified or reversed some of his earlier convictions or opinions during his long literary career from 386 to 430. For instance, with a mere elementary knowledge of both Neo-Platonism and Christian revelation, he was confident of finding in one nothing that was in opposition with the other. But he advanced in knowledge as he progressed in writing,² and he came to see the irreconcilable opposition that exists between Neo-Platonism and Christianity. His thought progresses as his knowledge expands. "Whoever reads my works in the order in which they were written, will perhaps see how I have made progress by writing."³

As if to provide for those who would not read his works in their chronological order, Augustine, a few years before his death (426-7 A.D.), wrote his famous *Retractations*—a critique of all his extant writings. He there notes the emendations he would have made in each of his published works. Of the *Contra Academicos*, he writes:

1. "And therefore when I had given up both what I had acquired and what I used to wish to acquire in the

1 *Contra Academicos*, Bk. III, ch. 20, no. 43.

2 "I confess that by writing I learned many things I had not previously known." (*De Trinitate*, Bk. III, Preface.)

3 *Retractations*, Prol., no. 3.

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ambitions of this world, and—although not yet baptized—had betaken myself to the peace of a Christian life, my first written work was *against the Academics, or about the Academics*; for their arguments used to disquiet me. In many minds those arguments engender despair of finding truth, for they make it difficult to give assent to anything. The Academics forbid a wise man from regarding anything as clear and certain, for they hold that everything is obscure and doubtful. For this reason, I wrote in order to dismiss those arguments from my mind with the best counter-arguments I could discover. Through the merciful aid of the Lord, this was accomplished.

2. "But I regret that in those three books I made such frequent use of the word, *fortune*. Of course, I did not intend that term to be understood as designating some goddess: I employed it to designate a fortuitous issue of circumstances in good things or in evil, whether they be of our own bodies or outside them; for, although no religion forbids us to employ the words, *perchance*, *mayhap*, *peradventure*, *haply*, *perhaps*, yet the total event is to be attributed to divine Providence. In fact, I did not entirely neglect to refer to this; for I said: 'But perhaps what is commonly called fortune, is itself governed by a certain hidden order. And what we call a matter of chance, is perhaps only something whose cause and explanation are concealed.'⁴ Although I made that observation, I nevertheless regret the fact that in those books I made such frequent mention of fortune; for I see that men are woe-fully accustomed to say, 'Fortune has decreed this,' when the expression ought to be, 'God has willed it.' And in a certain passage, I said: 'It is so appointed, either in accordance with our own merit or by virtue of nature's law, that the port of wisdom will never give entry to the divine mind that dwells in mortals, etc.'⁵ Now, those two phrases

⁴ *Lib. I, cap. I, n. 1.*

⁵ *Id. I, 1.*

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ought to have been omitted, because the sense would be complete without them; or at any rate, it would have been sufficient to say, 'in accordance with our own merits,' since misery is truly derived from Adam. In any case, I ought not to have added, 'or by virtue of nature's law,' because the dire necessity of our nature has arisen as a punishment for the iniquity that preceded it. And also with regard to my saying in those books, 'that whatever can be discerned by mortal eyes, or whatever any of the senses can reach, is to be of no concern; but rather that all of it ought to be disregarded'⁶—with regard to that expression, additional words should have been used, so that the passage would read thus, 'whatever any of the senses of a mortal body can reach'; for there is also a sense of the mind. But I was then speaking in the manner of those who say that there is no sense except the bodily senses, and no sensible things except the corporeal. Consequently, wherever I have spoken in that fashion, ambiguity has not been avoided, except with respect to those whose customary mode of speech is of that character. And I also said: 'Why do you think that to live a happy life, is anything else than to live in conformity with that which is the very best element in man?' And shortly afterwards, explaining what I had pronounced to be the very best element in man, I asked this question: 'Who can doubt that the very best element in man is nothing else than that part of the mind to which it befits all the other elements in man to conform as to a master? And lest you should request another definition, that part can be called mind or reason.'⁷ Of course, this is true; for, insofar as man's nature is concerned, there is in him nothing superior to mind or reason. Nevertheless, whoever wishes to live a happy life, ought not to live in accordance with this element. If he lives according to this element, he lives according to man; whereas, in order to

⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 3.

⁷ I, ii, 5.

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be able to reach happiness, life must be regulated according to God. And for the sake of attaining happiness, our mind ought not to be content with itself: it ought to be subjected to God. And in another passage, replying to one of the debaters, I say: 'On that point, you certainly are not in error. And I should like this to be for you an omen with regard to all the other points.'⁸ Although this was spoken in jest, and was not intended as a serious assertion, yet I should prefer not to have used the word, omen. I should like to have omitted it, precisely because I do not recall having read that word either in our sacred Scripture or in a discourse of any ecclesiastical expositor, although the word, *abomination*—which is derived from it—is found in several passages of the divine Scripture.⁹

3. "And in the second book there is an absolutely silly and absurd quasi fable about philocaly and philosophy, to the effect that 'they are akin, begotten of the same parent.'¹⁰ Now, either the so-called philocaly is concerned with trifles, and can therefore be in no way akin to philosophy; or—if the name be taken at its face value, because in our language it means love of beauty; and the beauty of wisdom is the true and supreme beauty—philocaly and philosophy are identical in incorporeal things. In neither case, can they be regarded as sisters. In another passage, where I was treating of the mind, I said that 'rendered more secure, it would return to heaven.'¹¹ I would have rendered my meaning more secure if I had said that the mind 'would go,' rather than that it 'would return'; for there are those who think that human souls have fallen from heaven, or that—in punishment for their sins— they

⁸ *Id.* iv, 11.

⁹ The Vulgate edition contains the word, *omen*, in III Kings, XX, 33. Perhaps the word was not used in the edition which Augustine had; or perhaps he regarded it as a pagan term, because it is attributed to the servants of Benadad.

¹⁰ II, iii, 7.

¹¹ *Id.* ix, 22.

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have been cast out of heaven and are imprisoned in those bodies of ours.¹² But I had no misgiving about expressing it that way; for, in saying that it would return to heaven, I meant to say that it would return to God, its author and creator. In fact, the blessed Cyprian did not hesitate to say that 'since we possess the body from the earth and the spirit from heaven, we are truly earth and heaven.'¹³ And in the Book of Ecclesiastes it is written, 'before the spirit return to God, who gave it.'¹⁴ Of course, this is to be understood in such manner as not to contradict the Apostle, who says that those not yet born have not done aught of good or evil.¹⁵ Indisputably, then, God himself is, in some manner, the original region of happiness for the soul—not that He begot it of himself, but because He created it from nothing else, just as He created the body and the whole earth. But with regard to the origin of the soul—how it comes to pass that it is in the body, namely, whether it is derived from the one man who was first created when man was made into a living soul, or whether each man is likewise made with an individual soul—that is something which I did not know at that time; nor do I know it now.

4. "In the third book, I say: 'If you ask my opinion, I believe that man's highest good is in the mind.'¹⁶ I would have expressed it more accurately by saying that it is in God; for, to be happy, the mind enjoys Him as its highest good. Nor am I pleased with this expression of mine: 'I may swear by everything holy.'¹⁷ And also what I said about the Academics was not correctly stated, namely, that they had a knowledge of truth whose likeness they used to call truth-like, and that the verisimilar thing which

12 The Platonists. Cf. *City of God*, Bk. 10, c. 30; Bk. 12, c. 26.

13 Cyprian, *Lib. de orat. Dom.*

14 *Eccles.* XII, 7.

15 *Rom.* IX, 11.

16 III, xiii, 27.

17 III, xvi, 35.

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they used to approve, was false.¹⁸ That statement is incorrect, for two reasons:—a) because in that case whatever was in any way similar to something else, would itself be false, whereas it is actually something true in its own genus; b) because I said that they used to accept as true the false things which they used to term verisimilar, whereas they used to accept nothing as true, and used to claim that a wise man would accept nothing as true. But I came to say that about them, because they used to call the verisimilar a probable thing. Moreover, I was displeased—and not without reason—by the praise with which I extolled Plato and the Platonic or Academic philosophers far more than was fitting for irreligious men; for it is against their gross errors that Christian teaching must be especially defended. And the following also, though spoken in jest and manifest irony, ought to have been left unsaid, namely, that, in comparison with the arguments which Cicero used in his writings on the Academics, my arguments by which I refuted them in decisive fashion, were merely trifles.¹⁹ This work begins with the words: ‘O Romanianus, would that . . .’”

18 III, xviii, 40.

19 III, xx, 45.

NOTES

NOTE 1

The Academics. From the fact that Plato used to deliver his discourse in the Academy¹ at Athens, his pupils and adherents became known as Academics. The Academy continued after Plato's death, and his immediate successors devoted themselves exclusively to the task of expounding the system which he had elaborated. They were, however, incapable of understanding his sublime theories; and they distorted them into pantheism. This process of change was indeed gradual, but not constant: its several stages can be more or less clearly distinguished. Accordingly, each notable departure from genuine Platonism has been designated as the beginning of a new Academy. But, since this principle of division varies according to one's view of a departure as notable or otherwise, historians are not in complete agreement as to the number of distinct Academies. Some enumerate five, and designate them respectively as the Academy under:—a) Plato, b) Arcesilas, c) Carneades, d) Philo, e) Antiochus. Others recognize four, namely, *The Old Academy*, under Plato and his successors who contented themselves with expounding his doctrines; *The Middle Academy*, beginning with Arcesilas, who was the first of the Academics to introduce questions not expressly treated by Plato: he introduced skepticism; *The Third Academy*, dominated by Carneades, who is said to have modified the skepticism of Arcesilas; and *The New Academy*, under Philo, and under Antiochus, who introduced what he falsely believed to be the teachings of Plato.

Since the problem of certitude is common to all philosophic schools—no matter how much they may differ in other respects—it was inevitable that all the philosophic

¹ See note 9, page 255.

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schools should become involved, and perhaps differ among themselves, as to the solution of this problem. And since skepticism was universally regarded as begotten and developed in the Academy, the terms, *skeptic* and *Academic*, became synonymous. It was easy to point out that the Academy had not always taught skepticism; and for that reason, a distinction had to be made between the Old and the New Academies. On the other hand, since the earlier Academics had not treated the question at all, they could not be counted as opposed to skepticism. Hence some adherents to the New Academy—desirous of claiming affiliation with Plato—maintained that Arcesilas merely restored a portion of Plato's teaching which the earlier Academics had neglected.² It was only after an express reminder by Alypius, that Augustine adverted to any distinction between the Old and the New Academies.³ To him, therefore, Academic and skeptic were synonymous terms; and his dialogue against the Academics is truly his *Answer to Skeptics*.

For a detailed history and exposition of the several Academies, cf. Brochard, *Les Sceptiques Grecs*, Paris, 1932, 2nd ed., pp. 99 *sqq.*

2 "They call this the New Academy; but to me it seems to be the Old Academy, especially if we reckon Plato among the members of the Old; for, in his books nothing is affirmed with certitude, and many opposing arguments are proffered."

(Cicero, *Academ.*, I, xii, 46; cf. *De fin.* IV, ii, 3.)

3 Bk. II, ch. 5, no. 11-13.

NOTE 2

Romanianus—the father of Licentius, was a fellow townsman and a lifelong friend of Augustine. At Tagaste he supplied the needed funds to enable the youthful Augustine to pursue a course of higher studies at Carthage.¹ At

1 Bk. II, ch. 2, no. 3; *Confessions*, Bk. II, ch. 3, no. 5-6.

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Milan—some fifteen years later—he was foremost in promoting their plan of a common household for Augustine and himself, and seven or eight others; and was most willing to share his immense wealth with them in the undertaking.² His continued confidence in Augustine is evidenced by the fact that Licentius is now placed under the latter's tutorship at Cassiciacum.

Through Augustine's influence or urging, Romanianus had been induced to become—like Augustine himself—an adherent to Manichaeism.³ When the *Contra Academicos* was being composed, he was—what Augustine had but recently ceased to be—a dissatisfied and wavering adherent to the scepticism of the New Academy.⁴ In fact, Augustine fears that he may have returned to Manichaeism or have embraced Stoicism.⁵

Although there is no room for conjecture as to Augustine's purpose in holding this disputation,⁶ yet the purpose of his having it committed to writing and sent to Romanianus, was obviously the latter's conversion to Christianity, through the study of Platonic philosophy; for he promises to send him also a treatise on religion.⁷ A few years later, he composed the treatise, *De vera religione*, and dedicated it to Romanianus. It is not known how soon Romanianus became a Christian, but a letter of Paulinus of Nola indicates that he was a devout Christian in 396.⁸

2 Bk. II, ch. 2, no. 4; *Confessions*, Bk. VI, ch. 14, no. 24.

3 Bk. I, ch. 1, no. 3; *Confessions*, Bk. IV, ch. 1, no. 1. Cf. Note 4, page 245.

4 See Note 1, page 241.

5 Cf. Bk. II, ch. 3, no. 6-8.

6 Cf. *Retractations*, Bk. I, ch. 1, no. 1.

7 Cf. Bk. II, ch. 3, no. 8.

8 *Epist.* XXXII, *inter Augustinianas*.

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NOTE 3

Cicero's Influence. Although it was the reading of Cicero's *Hortensius* that occasioned Augustine's impassioned quest for truth,¹ there is no reason for believing that he was in any other way influenced by Cicero. For, on his own admission, Cicero was only a dilettante philosopher;² and it is worth noting that Augustine did not give even a tentative adherence to Cicero's favorite system³ until he had despaired of finding the truth in any system.⁴ In fact, he half reveals an antipathy towards Cicero, when he speaks of him as a man "whose language, but not whose heart, almost everybody admires";⁵ and in at least two passages of the present work there is still clearer indication of that antipathy.⁶

However, it was through Cicero's writings—especially the *Academic Questions*—that Augustine derived his knowledge of scepticism and the arguments that had been urged in its support. Hence, the numerous similarities of expression in the *Academic Questions* and in the *Contra Academicos*. But such similarities of expression are not to be taken as indications of agreement in conviction or sentiment.

1 Cf. *Confessions*, Bk. III, ch. 4, no. 7; *De beata vita*, no. 4. See note 4, page 245.

2 Cf. *Academ.*, Bk. II, ch. 20, no. 66.

3 The scepticism of the New Academy. See note 1, page 241.

4 Cf. *Confessions*, Bk. V, ch. 10, no. 19.

5 *Ibid.* Bk. III, ch. 4, no. 7.

6 Bk. II, ch. 1, no. 1. "... would have been buried . . . with the very bodies of Carneades and Cicero."

Bk. III, ch. 18, no. 41. "Nothing seems more bloated than for a man to express copiously and ornately so many things that he does not believe."

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NOTE 4

Saint Augustine and Platonism. In the philosophic dialogues at Cassiciacum, Augustine manifests such an affectionate attachment to Neo-Platonism¹ that some² have even ventured to assert that his recent conversion at Milan was a conversion, not to Christianity, but to Neo-Platonism, and that he was not converted to Christianity until after his baptism. In an effort to sustain this position, they either ignore his testimony in the *Confessions*, or maintain that he himself was deluded as to the nature and the time of his conversion to Christianity.

Of course, Neo-Platonism permeates his early philosophic dialogues; but it is not the criterion to which Christian revelation is made to conform. Rather, Christian revelation is made the criterion for Neo-Platonism. "A twofold force impels us toward knowledge—the force of authority and the force of reason. In regard to faith, I am resolved never to deviate from the authority of Christ, for I find none more powerful. . . . Meanwhile, I am confident that I shall find among the Platonists what is not in opposition to our Sacred Scriptures."³

In his predilection for Platonism, Augustine was no exception among the Christian thinkers of his day; for Plato was the favorite pagan philosopher of almost all of them. Augustine was indeed unique in his enthusiasm for the system, and in his implicit trust in its soundness, and in an attachment that approached the nature of a personal affection. This attitude was undoubtedly occasioned by the singular rôle which Platonism had played in his conversion or reversion to Christianity. It had furnished him the light

1 By Augustine, the Neo-Platonists are called simply Platonists. In his *City of God* (Bk. VIII, ch. 12) he lists Plotinus, Iamblichus, Porphyry and Apuleius as renowned Platonists.

2 E.g. Harnack and Alfarc.

3 Bk. III, ch. 20, no. 43.

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that had led him back to Christ, whom he had never ceased to love, but whom he had lost through his own blindness to the immaterial. There was never a more honest searcher for truth than Augustine, there was never a more sincere lover of truth: no other searcher combined more strongly and harmoniously the powers of the mind and the affections of the heart in the testing of whatever claimed to be true. And no truth was able to satisfy his longing except the truth in Christ.

In his nineteenth year, the reading of Cicero's *Hortensius* inflamed his affective nature with a burning love for truth; but the *Hortensius* failed to satisfy him because it did not mention Christ.⁴ He falls an easy prey to the Manichaeans because they promise to reveal the truth, but especially because they speak in cryptic manner of God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.⁵ He reads many of the other philosophers, and finds them more satisfactory indeed than the Manichaeans, but nevertheless unable to satisfy him because their speculations do not reach unto God.⁶ Time and again, he returned to the Scriptures; but their simple style repelled him, and their content was beyond his comprehension because he was now unable to grasp the notion of a spiritual being.⁷ He would not commit the care of his languishing soul to any of the philosophers, because they were without the saving name of Christ.⁸

Throughout the whole course of his frantic search, false appearances of truth present themselves on every side, and mock his earnest efforts; they allure him to the heights of hope, and then hurl him to the depths of despair. After some ten years of alternate seeming success and tragic

⁴ *Confessions*, Bk. III, ch. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Bk. III, ch. 6. no. 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Bk. V, ch. 3, no. 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Bk. III, ch. 5; Bk. V, ch. 11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Bk. V, ch. 14, no. 25.

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failure, he seeks respite in defeatism, the scepticism of the New Academy⁹—not because he approves the system, but merely because he thinks that the Academics are more circumspect than the other philosophers.¹⁰

A short time later, after hearing the sermons of St. Ambrose at Milan, he forms the opinion—after the manner of the New Academy—that the Catholic position can be equally maintained and refuted. Finally, a friend brought him the Latin versions¹¹ of some books of the Neo-Platonists. Through these he learned how to examine the workings and the nature of his own mind, and thus to grasp the notion of the immaterial. At once, he realizes that without such a notion he had hitherto been groping blindly, unable to recognize the object of his search, although it had been with him continually.¹² “For behold Thou wert within, and I was without, and there was I seeking Thee. I, foul and hideous, was rushing heedlessly amidst the things of beauty Thou hast made. Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee. The things which would not be, were they not in Thee—those very things were keeping me far from Thee.”¹³

Neo-Platonism had removed his intellectual blindness. He believed it could do the same for others. It had—providentially, he believed¹⁴—prepared him to understand the Sacred Scriptures, and to give full assent to the truths of Christian revelation. That he did not regard Neo-Platonism as the determining cause of his conversion to Christianity, is abundantly clear from his own words: “Had I not sought Thy way in Christ our Saviour, I

9 See note 1, page 241.

10 *Confessions*, Bk. V, ch. 10, no. 19.

11 Translated by Marius Victorinus. Cf. *ibid.*, Bk. VIII, ch. 2, no. 3.

12 *Ibid.*, Bk. VII, ch. 9-10.

13 *Ibid.*, Bk. X, ch. 27, no. 38.

14 Cf. *ibid.*, Bk. VII, ch. 9, no. 13.

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would have come to destruction instead of instruction."¹⁵

In fact, he never gave full and unreserved assent to any mere philosophic system. He continued with the Manichaeans, not because he believed he had found the truth among them, but because he was hoping to find it.¹⁶ He gave only a tentative adherence to the New Academy, and he never accepted its tenet of universal doubt.¹⁷ Neither did he ever accept all the theories of Platonism, or Neo-Platonism. Those that he never accepted, are:

- a) The practice of pagan and polytheistic worship.¹⁸
- b) The existence of minor gods.¹⁹
- c) The theory of emanation.²⁰
- d) The necessity of creation.²¹
- e) The eternity of creation, or of the human soul.²²
- f) The pre-existence of the human soul.²³
- g) The theory of metempsychosis.²⁴
- h) The theory that the body is a prison for the punishment of the soul.²⁵
- i) The Aphorism of Apuleius: *Nullus Deus miscetur homini*.²⁶

The only Platonism that he ever accepted was a Platonism that he believed to be in harmony with the truths of Christian revelation. With a mere elementary knowledge

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Bk. VII, ch. 20, no. 26.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Bk. V, ch. 3, no. 3; ch. 6, no. 10; *De beata vita*, no. 4.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Bk. V, ch. 11; Bk. VI, ch. 4, no. 6.

¹⁸ Cf. *De vera religione*, ch. 1; *De consensu evangel.*, I, viii, 13; *De civ. Dei*, VIII, x, 12; *ibid.*, X, i.

¹⁹ Cf. *De civ. Dei*, XII, xxiv, 26.

²⁰ Cf. *De vera religione*, ch. 18; *Contra Secundinum*, ch. 4; *De actis cum Felice Manichaeo*, II, xviii; *Acta contra Fortunatum*, no. 13.

²¹ Cf. *Contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas*, cc. 2, 8.

²² Cf. *De civ. Dei*, X, c. 31; *ibid.*, XI, cc. 4-6; *ibid.*, XII, cc. 15-20.

²³ Cf. *De Genesi ad Litteram*, X, c. 7; *Retract.*, I, viii, 2.

²⁴ Cf. *De civ. Dei*, X, c. 30; *ibid.*, XII, c. 26.

²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, XII, c. 26; *De anima et ejus origine*, I, cc. 12, 19.

²⁶ Cf. *De civ. Dei*, IX, c. 16.

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of both systems, he naturally suspected no opposition between them, since he believed that the one had providentially prepared him for the other.²⁷ But as he progressed in his knowledge of Platonic theories and of Christian dogma, he continually modified his attitude towards the former. The extremes of his enthusiasm for Platonism and his antagonism towards it are found respectively in the *Contra Academicos* and in the *Retractations*: "I am confident that I shall find among the Platonists what is not in opposition to our Sacred Scriptures." "It is against their gross errors that Christian teaching must be especially defended."

For the sources of Augustine's philosophy, cf. A. Casamassa, O.S.A., *Acta Hebdomadae Augustinianae-Thomisticae*, Turin, 1931, pp. 88-96.

For an exhaustive treatment of Augustine's Neo-Platonism, cf. Boyer, *Christianisme et Neo-Platonisme etc.*, Paris, 1920.

27 Cf. *Confessions*, Bk. VII, ch. 9, no. 13.

NOTE 5

The soreness of the chest. This was undoubtedly a chronic ailment, and was probably a result of his childhood illness.¹ It is to be noted that in the *Confessions* (IX, ii, 4), he explicitly states that, although this ailment was sufficient to compel him to terminate his teaching activity, he had also a more compelling reason for doing so, namely, the resolution to retire permanently from all worldly pursuits; but that he deemed it inadvisable to make this latter reason generally known. This explains the omission of any reference to it here—in a dialogue that was begun a few days after his arrival at Cassiciacum. The *Confessions*, of

1 Cf. *Confessions*, Bk. I, ch. 9, no. 17. He refers to it also in *De beata vita*, no. 4; *De ordine*, Bk. I, ch. 2, no. 5; and again in *Confessions*, Bk. IX, ch. 2, no. 4.

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course, give a more intimate revealment of Augustine's mind. In the dialogues, he cites reasons that are objectively evident. For instance, in the *Contra Academicos* (Bk. II, ch. 2, no. 3), he says that he returned from Tagaste to Carthage "for the sake of a more illustrious profession." In the *Confessions* (Bk. IV, ch. 7, no. 12), he says that he returned on account of grief over the recent death of a friend. Both as regards his returning to Carthage at that time, and as regards his resigning his professorship later, he mentions the objective reasons in the dialogues; but in the *Confessions*, he reveals his intimate affections.

For an account of Augustine's physical constitution and his chronic ailments, cf. B. Legewie, *Die körperliche Konstitution und die Krankheiten Augustins*, in *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, Rome, 1931, Vol. II, pp. 5-21.

NOTE 6

The bosom of philosophy. This expression has sometimes been adduced in support of the contention that Augustine was not yet a convert to Christianity, since he says nothing about religion.

As an argument *ex silentio*, it has no probative value unless Augustine ought to have mentioned his conversion to Christianity if it had taken place. In the present instance, however, he is urging Romanianus to join him in the study of philosophy; and, quite naturally, he confines himself to that science: he does not drag in the name of religion. But in many other passages throughout the dialogue, he makes it quite clear that, beyond and above Neo-Platonism, religion is his guide. For instance, he hopes that this dialogue will definitively win Romanianus away from the scepticism of the New Academy; but that, in case he has relapsed into Manichaeism, a later treatise on religion will dispel that superstition.¹ And, of course, his proviso

¹ Bk. II, ch. 3, no. 8.

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that Neo-Platonism be not in opposition with the Sacred Scriptures is too explicit to allow of any doubt.²

2 Cf. Boyer, *op. cit.*, *passim*. See note 4, page 245.

NOTE 7

Cassiciacum or *Cassiacum*. When Augustine resigned the professorship of rhetoric at Milan, and resolved to withdraw from all secular pursuits, his friend Verecundus, a grammarian in the same city, generously offered his country home as a temporary residence for him and his companions.¹ In manuscripts anterior to the ninth and tenth centuries, the name of the locality is written Cassiacum. Later manuscripts, however, give it as Cassiciacum; and this has come to be the generally—but not universally—accepted form of the name.²

Cassiciacum or Cassiacum is generally assumed to be the ancient name of the modern Cassago, a town situated in the hilly district of Brianza, about forty miles northeast of Milan. In fact, claim has been made that the exact site of the villa is discernible today from the traces of the old water channel, the baths, and the meadow, to which Augustine has made frequent reference in the *De ordine*.³ This conjecture, however, would assume that the villa of Verecundus was the only one of that description within reasonable distance of Milan.

In 1843, Alessandro Manzoni, the celebrated Italian novelist, undertook to prove that the ancient Cassiciacum or Cassiacum was to be identified, not with Cassago, but with Casciago, a town situated about eighty miles north of Milan. His proffered reasons have not changed the hitherto prevailing opinion. At the present time, then,

1 Cf. *Confessions*, Bk. IX, ch. 1, no. 5.

2 Cf. A. Vega, O.S.A., *Confessiones Sancti Augustini*, El Escorial, 1930, p. 251.

3 Bk. I, ch. 3; *et passim*. Cf. Vega, *id.*, *ibid.*

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there is no certainty as to the site or the locality of the villa where Augustine composed the dialogues; but Cassago is regarded as the probable locality.

For a full treatment of the question, cf. F. Meda, *La controversia sul rus Cassiciacum*, in *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, Rome, 1931, vol. II, pp. 49-59.

NOTE 8

The Probable Dates. Although the question of the chronological order of Saint Augustine's three philosophic dialogues¹ is distinct from that of the definite dates of their composition, the two questions are nevertheless inseparable. Augustine gives us only incomplete information regarding both the chronological order and the definite dates: he tells us that the *De beata vita* and the *De ordine* were composed, neither before nor after the *Contra Academicos*, but during the course of its composition,² and that the *De beata vita* was composed on the days of November 13, 14, 15.³ In both instances, Augustine is obviously referring to the order and the time in which the oral discussions took place, and not to the order and time in which they were reduced to permanent written form.⁴

Van Haeringen, however, maintains that Augustine gives the chronological order, not of the oral discussions recorded in those dialogues, but of their literary revision.⁵ And he further maintains that the oral discussions of the *Contra Academicos* were completed before those of the other two dialogues were begun. Of the many reasons that render this opinion untenable, we now restrict ourselves to one,

1 The *Contra Academicos*, *De beata vita*, and *De ordine*.

2 *Retractationes*, lib. I, cc. 2-3.

3 *De beata vita*, 6, 17, 23.

4 Cf. C. Boyer, *Christianisme et Néo-Platonisme*, Paris, 1920, pp. 9-10.

5 *De Augustini ante baptismum rusticantis operibus*, Groningen, 1917, pp. 43-5.

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namely: the discussions in the *De beata vita* were begun on the day that Augustine entered the thirty-third year of his age, and he was in his thirty-third year before the discussions in the *Contra Academicos* were completed.⁶ To escape this difficulty, Van Haeringen assumes that in the oral discussion Augustine said he was in his thirty-second year, but that either Augustine himself or some one else made it read "thirty-third" in the written text. Such assumptions are not justified without grave reasons; and Van Haeringen offers none.⁷

Tillemont was perhaps the first to make a serious effort to determine the definite dates of the several discussions in the three dialogues,⁸ and his reckoning has been generally accepted.⁹ As regards the discussions contained in the first book of the *Contra Academicos*, he offers very convincing reasons for regarding November 10, 11, 12, as the probable dates; but with regard to the discussions in the other two books, he merely says that they were begun eight days after the completion of the first book.

We believe that the exact dates for the discussions in the first book can be determined with almost absolute certainty, and that almost the same degree of certitude can be attained with regard to the dates of the other discussions.

6 "I am now in my thirty-third year." III, xx, 43.

7 Cf. Boyer, *id.*, *ibid.*

8 *Memoire pour servir a l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, Paris, 1702, tome XIII, pp. 959 sqq. A Latin adaptation of this work is found in Migne, P.L. 32, coll. 66-578.

9 On one point, however, his opinion is strangely at variance with definite information contained in the very text of the *Contra Academicos*: without offering any reasons, he accords a certain degree of probability to the days of November 4, 12, and 13, as the dates of the discussions contained in the first book. Those discussions were held on three consecutive days. Cf. I, ii, 5; I, iv, 11; I, vi, 16.

Some have erroneously represented Tillemont as assigning four days to those discussions. This is undoubtedly due to a mistranslation of a concise expression in the original or in the Latin adaptation.

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The key to the problem's solution is composed of items from the three dialogues and from the *Retractations*. Its effectiveness is derived especially from the fact that two intervals of unequal duration—an interval of *about seven days*, and one of *a very few days*—must end on the same day. If they end before November 19, the shorter interval can scarcely be called an interval of a very few days; and if they end after that date, the longer interval will be one of more than about seven days.

The discussions recorded in the first book of the *Contra Academicos* were held on three consecutive days; and Alypius departed for Milan on the first day.¹⁰ From the end of the third day to the time in which the discussions were resumed, there was an intermission of about seven days. Then Alypius returned, the discussions were resumed almost at once, and carried on for three consecutive days.¹¹ The *De beata vita* was composed on November 13, 14, and 15.¹² The first book of the *De ordine* was composed during the forenoons of two consecutive days; no other discussions were held by the disputants on those days; and Alypius returned to their midst a very few days later.¹³ Both of those dialogues were composed during an intermission in the composing of the *Contra Academicos*.¹⁴ But the only prolonged intermission was that which occurred between the completion of the first book and the beginning of the second.

10 I, ii, 5; I, iv, 11; I, vi, 16.

11 II, iv, 10; II, xi, 25; III, i, 1. The obvious meaning of the text in the *De ordine* is that Alypius returned some time in the forenoon ("a very clear sun having risen," II, i, 1), that the disputants then repaired to the meadow, that they resumed the discussions of the *De ordine*, and continued them as far as chapter III of the second book, and that they then suddenly postponed those discussions in order to complete "the task they had undertaken," viz. the refutation of the Academics. (Cf. *Contra Academicos*, I, ix, 25; *De ordine*, II, ii, 7).

12 Nos. 6, 17, 23.

13 I, iii, 6; I, ix, 27; I, viii, 26; I, xi, 33; II, i, 1.

14 *Retractationes*, I, ii; I, iii, 1.

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Now, since the 13th, 14th and 15th were spent on the *De beata vita*, and since the forenoons of two other¹⁵ consecutive days were spent on the first book of the *De ordine*, this latter could not have been completed earlier than the forenoon of the 17th. And an interval of "a very few days" must extend at least to the morning of the 19th. Therefore, Alypius did not return earlier than the morning of the 19th. And since it is now clear that no discussions on the Academics were held since the morning of the 13th inclusive, it is equally clear that the intermission of "about seven days" must terminate not later than the 19th. But the intermission began at the end of the third day, and it was ended on the day that Alypius returned.¹⁶ Therefore, we conclude that the respective dates of the discussions in the *Contra Academicos* are November 10, 11, 12, 19, 20, 21. And, from the fact that Augustine entered his thirty-third year at this time, it follows that the year was 386.

15 Those days were distinct from any day on which other discussions were held. Cf. I, viii, 26; I, xi, 33.

16 See footnote 11, page 254.

NOTE 9

The Academy. The word, academy, is merely the English form of the Greek word, 'Ακαδήμεια. Lexicons, as a rule, merely state that this was the site of Plato's school at Athens; that the place was named after a hero, named Academus; and that there is a variant form, 'Ακαδημία. But, to the best of our knowledge, none of them contains even a conjecture as to the etymology of the word itself. At any rate, Boisacq does not list it in his *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*.¹

Saint Augustine, however, clearly implies that the word signifies remoteness from the populace; for he says that

1 Heidelberg, 1938.

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Plato's school received its name for that reason.² Obviously, he believes that the word is composed of ἔκας = afar off, and δῆμος = the populace. But on this assumption, the English form of the word would be, not academy, but hecademy. And according to Suidas, the tenth century lexicographer, Ἐκαδημία was the original form in the Greek.³

This derivation of the word would clarify Augustine's casual reference to the reason why Plato's school received that name.

2 Bk. III, ch. 9, no. 18.

3 *Suidae Lexicon*, ed. Ad. Adler, Leipsic, 1928-38.

NOTE 10

Augustine's Skepticism. Because Augustine says that as yet he has nothing which he can regard as certain, some have concluded that he still retained the skepticism of the New Academy.¹ As a rule, those writers maintain that his conversion at Milan a few months previously, was a conversion to Neo-Platonism, and not to Christianity.²

Separated from its context, Augustine's expression would obviously convey that meaning; but sentences are not to be understood or interpreted apart from their context, immediate or remote. In the present instance, it is necessary to bear in mind that, in the course of the dialogue, Augustine frequently changes from the rôle of debater to that of moderator or teacher. This is wholly in keeping with the expressed purposes of the debate, namely to dismiss the Academics' arguments from his mind,³ and to test the abilities of his two pupils.⁴ Consequently, when he says that

1 Thimme, *Augustins geistige Entwicklung*, Berlin, 1908.

Alfaric, *L'évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin*, Paris, 1918.

2 See note 4, page 245.

3 Cf. *Retractations*, Bk. I, ch. 1, no. 1.

4 *Contra Academicos*, Bk. I, ch. 1, no. 4.

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as yet he has no certitude, the "as yet" may indeed mean, "up to the present moment in my life," or it may mean, "up to the present moment in this debate." In other words, he may be expressing a real doubt or a mere methodic doubt. If one kind of doubt would be in complete harmony with the context, and if the other would entail contradictions, it is obvious that the harmonious interpretation is the correct one. In the present instance, methodic doubt is in complete harmony with the context; for it incites the pupils to apply their minds to the question,⁵ and it tests their abilities. On the other hand, an expression of real doubt would involve several contradictions; for

a) He has just said that he had pondered the question deeply and for a long time. (no. 22). Therefore, it is not now that he is forming his opinions or convictions.

b) He says that he "will take up arms against the Academics, if they earnestly maintained the tenets which we read in their writings." (no. 24). Why would a skeptic take up arms against skeptics?

c) In their next session—on the following day—he is glad that Alypius adheres to the skepticism of the New Academy, because, *otherwise*, Alypius and himself would be in complete agreement, and could not have a satisfactory debate. (no. 25).

d) At first, he used to laugh at the Skeptics, but later he used to loathe their abominable teachings. (Bk. III, no. 34).

e) Most of the third book is devoted to his refutation of skepticism.

Even as regards Platonism, or Neo-Platonism, he employs methodic doubt. After he describes a theory of the Platonists, he adds: "*Perhaps*, it is among these we shall find the wise man we are seeking." (Bk. III, no. 26).

5 See the preceding sentence in the text.

ANSWER TO SKEPTICS

As a searcher for truth he was convinced that he had found his wise man among them.⁶ As a moderator of the discussions, he sees that the debate has not yet reached that point.⁷

6 See note 4, page 245.

7 Cf. Boyer, *op. cit.*

NOTE 11

Esoteric Doctrines. Long before Augustine's day, there was considerable uncertainty as to whether Arcesilas and others of the New Academy really held the opinion which they taught publicly. Certainly Cicero gives an intimation of his own doubt in that regard, when he represents Lucullus as saying: "Therefore, I wish to see what they [the Academics] have discovered. 'We do not usually reveal it,' he says. Then, what are those mysteries? Or why do you conceal your opinion like something shameful?" (*Academ.*, II, xviii, 60.)

Diocles of Cnidus says that Arcesilas assumed the pose of a skeptic in order to escape the attacks of the embittered foes of dogmatism. (Eusebius, *Praep. evang.*, vi, 6.)

According to Sextus Empiricus, the Academics' skepticism was merely a means of testing the fitness of their pupils for admittance to their mysteries. (P., I, 234.)

In the *Confessions*—written at least ten years later—Augustine still seems to cling to the opinion he expressed in the *Contra Academicos*. (V, x, 19). In the *Retractations*, he adverts to his having said that the Academics had a knowledge of truth, whose likeness they used to call truth-like. (I, i, 4.)¹

1 Cf. Brochard, *op. cit.*, pp. 114 *seq.*

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NOTE 12

Epicurean Stables. On account of the materialism of their system and the reputed character of their supreme good, Epicureans used to be called beasts. Horace characterized himself as "a swine of the herd of Epicurus."¹

Platonic Straw Man. Antiochus of Ascalon was one of Cicero's intimate and esteemed friends. Like Cicero, he had studied under the celebrated Academic, Philo of Larissa, and had embraced that teacher's exposition of Plato's doctrine. But, unlike Cicero, he later rejected Philo's tenets and argued bitterly against them. In the *Academic Questions*, Lucullus is presented as the expositor and defender of the theories of Antiochus, whilst Cicero defends the doctrine of Philo, and shows that Antiochus is, not a faithful interpreter of Plato, but a pseudo-Platonist—a Platonic straw man.²

¹ *Epist.* I, 4, 15. Cf. Cicero, *Academ.*, I, ii, 6; II, xlv, 139; *id.*, frag. 20 (Müller).

² *Academ.*, II, iv-xix; xx-xlvii; xliii, 132; xlvi, 143.

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